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TO

JOSEPH M. LEVY,

THIS COMEDY IS DEDICATED

BY

HIS SINCERE AND OBLIGED FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.

London, October, 1870.

O U R S.

*First performed at the Prince of Wales's Theatre, in Liverpool,
August 23rd, 1866, and produced in London at the Prince of
Wales's Theatre, on Saturday, September 15th, 1866.*

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

	Liverpool.	London.	London, 1870.
Prince Perovsky ..	.. Mr. Hare.	.. Mr. Hare.	.. Mr. Hare.
Sir Alexander Shendry, Bt.	.. Mr. J. W. Ray	.. Mr. J. W. Ray	.. Mr. Addison.
Captain Samprey ..	.. .. ..	.. Mr. Trafford.	.. Mr. Herbert.
Angus MacAlister ..	.. Mr. Bancroft.	.. Mr. Bancroft.	.. Mr. Coghlan.
Hugh Chalcot ..	.. Mr. J. Clarke.	.. Mr. J. Clarke.	.. Mr. Bancroft.
Sergeant Jones ..	.. Mr. F. Dewar.	.. Mr. F. Younge.	.. Mr. Collette.
Houghton ..	.. Mr. Tindale.	.. Mr. Tindale.	
Lady Shendry ..	.. Miss Larkin.	.. Miss Larkin.	Miss Le Thiere.
Blanche Haye ..	Miss L. Moore.	{ Mis L. Moore. Miss Lydia Foote.	Miss Fanny Josephs.
Mary Netley ..	Miss Marie Wilton.		Miss Marie Wilton.

Period—Before, and during the Crimean War.

ACT I.—THE PARK—Autumn.

ACT II.—THE DRAWING-ROOM—Spring.

ACT III.—THE HUT—Winter.

O U R S .

ACT I.

SCENE.—An avenue of trees in Shendry Park; the avenue leading off to R.U.E. Seat round tree in foreground, R. Stumps off trees, L.C. and L. The termination of the avenue out of sight. Throughout the Act the autumn leaves fall from the trees. CHALCOT discovered asleep on ground under tree, L. 2 E., a handkerchief over his face.

STUMP OF TREE.



SET TREE.
[]
SEAT.

SET TREE.
O
STUMP.

Enter SERGEANT JONES, R. 1 E., meeting HOUGHTON, who enters with gun, L. 1 E., c. of stage.

SER. (R.) Good morning.

HOUGH. (L.) Good morning.

SER. (warmly) How are you?

HOUGH. Quite well; how are you?

SER. I'm—I'm as well as can be expected.

(semi-important)

HOUGH. What d'ye mean? (with dialect)

SER. (with importance) I mean that last night my missus— (whispers HOUGHTON)

HOUGH. (surprised) Nay!

SER. Fact.

HOUGH. Two! (SERGEANT nods) Twins? (SERGEANT nods) Well, mate, it does you credit! And I hope you'll soon get over it.

SER. Eh?

HOUGH. I mean I hope your missus 'ull soon get over it. Come and ha' some beer.

SER. I must go to the Hall first. I wish they'd been born at Malta.

HOUGH. Where?

SER. At Malta.

HOUGH. Malta! Be that where they make the best beer?

SER. No; it's "furrin." When a child's born in barracks there, it gets half a pound o' meat additional rations a-day.

HOUGH. Child does?

SER. It's parents. Twins would ha' been a pound a-day—pound o' meat you know. It's worth while being a father at Malta.

HOUGH. (*looking at SERGEANT admiringly and shoulder-ing his gun*) Come and ha' some beer to drink this here joyful double-barrelled event.

They turn up stage together, going towards U.E.R., meeting BLANCHE and MARY as they enter. Both fall back, SERGEANT to attention, HOUGHTON touching his cap as BLANCHE and MARY come down stage. SERGEANT and HOUGHTON exeunt.

BLANCHE. Don't walk so fast, Mary. Lady Shendrynn said she'd overtake us. Let us rest here. (*they sit on seat R.*) It's charming under the trees. I mean to look after the little boy. That's for him.

(*puts portemonnaie into basket*)

MARY. (L.) (*taking out portmonnaie*) And I mean to look after the little girl. This is for her.

(*puts portemonnaie into basket*)

BLANCHE. (R.) But, Mary, dear, can you afford it?

MARY. Yes; though I am poor, I must have some enjoyments. You rich people mustn't monopolise all the pleasures in the world.

BLANCHE. (*hurt*) My dear Mary, you know I didn't mean—

MARY. And I didn't mean; but I can't help being sensible. I know my place; and if I didn't, Lady Shendrynn and the world would make me. I haven't a penny, so I'm a companion, though I don't receive wages, which the cook does. But then she's respected—she's not in a false position. I wish I hadn't been born a lady.

BLANCHE. No you don't.

MARY. Yes *I* do. I should have kept a Berlin-wool shop, and been independent and happy. And you, Blanche—you could have rolled down in your carriage, and given your orders—Miss Netley, please send me home this—or that—and so on. *(with imitation)*

BLANCHE. Mary, do talk about something else.

MARY. Well, I will, dear, to please you; but it is annoying to be a companion. Not your companion, Blanche—that's charming—to know that you're kept in the room to save another woman from rising to ring a bell, or to hand her the scissors, or to play the piano when you're ordered. *(imitating)* Miss Netley—oh!—yes, a very nice person; so useful about the house. Useful—oh!—There, I beg your pardon, Blanche; but really Lady Shendry's temper does upset me—one minute she's so tender and sentimental, and the next—Poor Sir Alick. Then there's that Mr. Chalcot—I detest him.

BLANCHE. Why?

MARY. Oh, for his gloomy air, and his misanthropic eye-glass. *(imitating)* Liking nothing, and dissatisfied with everything.

BLANCHE. Despite all that, he has a very good heart.

MARY. My gentleman is rich, and thinks that every girl he speaks to is dying for his ugly face, his stupid bank-notes, and his nasty brewhouse. When I look at him I feel that I could smack his face.

BLANCHE. For being rich!

MARY. Yes—perhaps. No, for being disagreeable.

BLANCHE. I'm rich; at least, they tell me so.

MARY. But you're not disagreeable.

BLANCHE. Do talk about something else.

MARY. Who—what?

BLANCHE. Anything—anybody.

MARY. Of the people staying at the Hall?

BLANCHE. Yes.

MARY. Prince Perovsky?

BLANCHE. If you like.

MARY. He means “you”; I can see it in his eye. I know Sir Alick would say yes, and so would my lady. Blanche, what would you say?

BLANCHE. *(pensively)* I don't know.

MARY. That means “yes”! A Russian prince—wealthy, urbane—quite the grand air, but dried up as a Normandy pippin. Will my Blanche be a princess?

BLANCHE. Prince Perovsky is a little old.

MARY. Not for a prince. Princes are never old.

BLANCHE. And I'm a little young.

MARY. Not too young for a princess. Princesses are never too young.

BLANCHE. Why, Mary, you're quite worldly.

MARY. Only on your account. I should like to see you a princess. You'd be charming as a princess.

BLANCHE. (*smilingly*) And if I were and had a court, what would you be?

MARY. (*rising*) Mistress of the Robes, and First High Gold Parasol in Waiting! Oh, my charming, darling Royal Highness. My Highest, Mightiest, Most Serene Transparentissima!

Curtseying. CHALCOT wakes up, and looks about him.

BLANCHE. (*laughs*) How silly!

MARY. Who—me?

BLANCHE. Yes.

MARY. Then I renounce my allegiance—turn Radical, and dethrone you. I wish the prince would ask me.

BLANCHE. Ask you what?

MARY. (c.) To be his wife.

CHAL. (*aside*) Devil doubt you!

BLANCHE. How would you answer?

MARY. I'd answer—No!

CHAL. (*aside*) Dreadful falsehood!

MARY. Though I'd like to be a princess—a Russian princess—and have slaves.

BLANCHE. Oh! I shouldn't like to have slaves.

MARY. I should, particularly if they were men.

CHAL. (*aside*) Nice girl that!

BLANCHE. Let's leave off talking Russian.

MARY. What shall we talk then? Scotch?

BLANCHE. What a time Lady Shendry is!

MARY. About Angus McAlister? (*maliciously*)

BLANCHE. (*seeing CHALCOT*) Hush!

(*rising and crossing L.*)

MARY. (R.) What?

BLANCHE. There's a man.

CHAL. (*rising*) Don't be alarmed; I've heard nothing that I oughtn't to.

MARY. (*primly*) Impossible you should.

CHAL. (c.) I fell asleep under that tree. (*down c.*)

MARY. (R.) Why did you wake up?

BLANCHE. (L.) Asleep, just after breakfast !

CHAL. Humph ! There was nothing else to do.

MARY. You mean nothing else that *you* could do.

CHAL. I thought of climbing the tree ; good notion, wasn't it ?

MARY. Excellent—if you'd stayed up there !

CHAL. Eh ?

MARY. I mean, if you hadn't come down.

(*guns fired without*)

CHAL. Sir Alick might have brought me down.

BLANCHE. Mistaken you for a rook !

MARY. (*aside*) Or a scarecrow !

CHAL. (*pointing to basket*) What have you got there ?

BLANCHE. Guess.

CHAL. Can't. Never could make out conundrums—or ladies.

MARY. Beyond your comprehension ?

CHAL. Quite. (*annoyed*) Confound the girl ! (*aloud*) But what's in the basket ?

BLANCHE. (L. and holding up basket) Fowls, jelly, sago, tapioca, wine !

MARY. (*repeating her words*) Wine, tapioca, sago, jelly, fowls !

CHAL. That's variety ! Somebody ill ?

(MARY sits, R.)

Enter LADY SHENDRYN, who heard the last few words, U.E.R.

LADY S. Ill—no ! Nobody. They're all doing well.

(*down, R.C.*)

CHAL. All ! Who ?

LADY S. The Twins !

CHAL. (c.) Twins ! What twins ?

LADY S. Ours.

CHAL. Yours ? Yours and Sir Al—

LADY S. (*a languishing, sentimental, frisky person*) Mine and—no, no. What a man you are ! When I say Ours, I mean Sergeant Jones's.

CHAL. Sergeant Jones's !

LADY S. Of Ours — of Sir Alexander's regiment. Alexander is very fond of him ; and I quite doat on Mrs. Jones. You know the barracks are not eight miles off, and the railway drops you close to (*turning R.*) Miss Netley, I'll sit down—(MARY rises, and crosses, L.C. to

BLANCHE. LADY SHENDRYN *sits*, R.) So I gave Mrs. Jones the use of the Cottage—and it's—a most agreeable circumstance; isn't it?

CHAL. (*thoughtfully*) Very—for poor Jones!

MARY. (*aside to BLANCHE, L.*) Make him give you something—subscription—you know.

CHAL. (R.C.) (*overhearing*) Make me! I should like to see anyone make me!

BLANCHE. (*rising, and crossing to CHALCOT*) By the way (*to CHALCOT*) I'm collecting for them. (*taking out pocket-book*) How much shall I put you down for?

CHAL. (R.C.) (*seeing MARY's eyes on him*) Nothing.

MARY. (L.) Nothing!

LADY S. (R.) Oh, Hugh!

BLANCHE. Oh, Mr. Chalcot!

MARY. Oh, these men!

BLANCHE. Consider poor Mrs. Jones!

LADY S. And the twins!

CHAL. Twins! I don't think those sort of women ought to be encouraged.

MARY. (*aside*) And that's a man worth thousands!

BLANCHE. (*coaxingly*) Let me put you down for something!

MARY. A shilling!

CHAL. (*to MARY*) I'm not to be put down.

LADY S. Miss Netley, pray don't interfere. (*girls go up, L.*) How charming it is here, under the trees!—so poetical and leafy!

CHAL. (*throwing insect off her mantle*) And insecty!

(LADY SHENDRYN *starts up*)

Enter PRINCE, R.U.E., smoking a cigarette. CHALCOT crosses to L. PRINCE seeing ladies raises his hat, and throws cigarette on ground.

PRINCE.

LADY S.

O

O

BLANCHE.

O

O MARY.

O CHALCOT.

LADY S. Ah! here's the Prince. How charming!

MARY. He'll give something.

BLANCHE. (L.C.) Prince, I'm begging—make a subscription.

PRINCE. (R.C.) Let me trust I may be permitted to become a subscriber.

BLANCHE. For any amount you please. How much?
(with pocket-book)

PRINCE. I leave that to you.

LADY S. (R.) Oh, Prince, you are so kind!

MARY. (L.C.) What a difference! (to CHALCOT) A noble nation the Russians!
(goes up, R.)

BLANCHE. Will that do? (writing, and showing him)

PRINCE. If you think it sufficient.

(BLANCHE joins MARY)

LADY S. Charmingly chivalric!

PRINCE. Shall I be indiscreet in asking the object of—

LADY S. Objects! There are two!

PRINCE. Two objects!

CHAL. Yes—babies.

LADY S. Twins.

CHAL. (L.) The Jones's gemini!

(crosses up c. and sits under tree R.)

PRINCE. (to CHALCOT) Twins! Extraordinary people you English.

LADY S. We're going to take these things to the Cottage for them. (crossing c.) Prince! will you come as far?

PRINCE. If I may be allowed to take part in so delicate a mission.

LADY S. Blanche! the Prince will escort you.

(BLANCHE crosses, L.)

PRINCE. (crossing to BLANCHE) May I carry the basket?

BLANCHE. Can I trust you?

PRINCE. With what?

BLANCHE. The sago.

Exeunt PRINCE and BLANCHE, L. 1 E.

LADY S. Miss Netley will be my cavalier.

MARY. What a treat! (coming from back L.C. to L.)

LADY S. Unless you, Mr. Chalcot—

CHAL. (eye to eye with MARY) Thanks, no. I'll stay where I am.

LADY S. We shall leave you all alone.

CHAL. I don't mind that.

MARY. That's just the sort of man who would pinch his wife on his wedding day.

Exeunt LADY SHENDRYN and MARY, L. 1 E.

CHAL. That's a detestable girl ! Whenever I meet her, she makes me thrill with dislike.

SERGEANT and KEEPER enter at end of avenue, R.U.E., carrying a large hamper. Meeting SIR ALEXANDER, L.U.E., in shooting dress. KEEPER takes gun and exits with SERGEANT L. 1 E.

SIR A. (c.) Ah, Hugh—that you ?

CHAL. Yes. (seated, r.)

SIR A. What have you been doing here ?

(sits on stump, l.)

CHAL. Sleeping. Shot anything ?

SIR A. A brace. I'm nervous. I've been annoyed this morning.

CHAL. I'm annoyed every morning—and evening, regularly.

SIR A. I'd bad news by post—and then my lady—and I'm so horribly hard up.

CHAL. A little management—

SIR A. I know ; but I've other troubles, Hugh. You're an old friend, and so was your father before you. If you only knew what was on my mind. There's my lady wrangling perpetually.

CHAL. People always quarrel when they're married—or single ; and you must make allowances—her ladyship is much younger than you.

SIR A. She might remember how long we have—But it isn't that—it isn't that.

CHAL. What then ?

SIR A. I mustn't tell—I wish I could.

CHAL. I'm open to receive a confession of early murder, or justifiable matricide.

SIR A. It isn't my secret, or I'd tell it you. Oh ! my lady is very wrong. The idea of her being jealous !

CHAL. I've heard that years ago you were a great killer.

SIR A. (not understanding) Killer ! Of what—birds ?

CHAL. No. Ladies.

SIR A. Oh !—like other men.

CHAL. That's bad—that's very bad. But surely my lady knew that before marriage you were not a Joseph ?

SIR A. Not she.

CHAL. But she must have guessed—

SIR A. Pooh ! pooh ! You're talking like a bachelor.

CHAL. A bachelor may know—

SIR A. A bachelor can know nothing. It is only after they're married that men begin to understand the purity of women—*(aside)*—or their tempers.

CHAL. But do you mean to tell me—between men, you know—that Lady Shendry has no cause.

SIR A. Has no cause? Certainly not—

CHAL. *Had* no cause, then?

SIR A. *Had!* Um—well—the slightest possible——

CHAL. Did she find it out?

SIR A. Unfortunately she did.

CHAL. Ah! Nuisance that—being found out. Is the cause removed now?

SIR A. The what?

CHAL. The cause—the slightest possible——

SIR A. Oh yes—long ago. Gone entirely.

CHAL. Dead?

SIR A. No—married.

CHAL. Better still. Further removed than ever.

SIR A. But my lady has never forgotten it. It was an absurd scrape; for I cared nothing about her.

CHAL. About my lady?

SIR A. (*irritably*) No—the——

CHAL. Slightest possible—no, no.

SIR A. Where is my lady?

CHAL. She has gone to the Cottage to see the interesting little Joneses. The Prince went with her—and Blanche—and—that other girl.

SIR A. Mary Netley! Charming girl that!

CHAL. Very.

SIR A. She's the daughter of very dear old friends, who died without leaving her a penny.

CHAL. Very dear old friends always do.

SIR A. What?

CHAL. Die without leaving pennies.

SIR A. Poor little thing! I wish I could find her a husband!

CHAL. What a misanthropic sentiment!

SIR A. Now, there's Blanche; she's a fortune. She, like Mary, has no guardians but us—neither father nor mother.

CHAL. Splendid qualification that; but Blanche is much too nice a girl to have a mother.

SIR A. She's another anxiety.

CHAL. All girls are anxieties.

SIR A. You were wrong to let Blanche slip through your fingers.

CHAL. Me marry an heiress ! Ugh ! (*shudders*) There's Prince Perovsky, he is very particular in his attentions.

SIR A. Yes ; it would be a good match. He owns two-thirds of a Russian province.

CHAL. Poor devil ! Isn't it rather awkward, his staying here ? If war is to be declared—

(*rises and goes up looking off R.*)

SIR A. He's off in a couple of days ; besides, after all, Russia may not mean fighting.

CHAL. There's Angus, coming down the avenue !

SIR A. (*rising*) Between you and me, Hugh, I wish he wouldn't come so often. He's too fond of teaching Blanche billiards. I'm always finding them with their heads closer together than is warranted by the rules of the game. When children, they saw a good deal of each other. Blanche is my ward, and an heiress ; Angus, a distant cousin, poor as a rat—the Scotch branch of the family. I shouldn't like it to be thought that I threw them together.

CHAL. No, no.

SIR A. I'll go and meet the people at the Cottage. I promised to join them. (*taking letters from his pocket, selecting one*) I daren't take this into the house with me ; eh—yes I may—this from Lady Llandudno. She's in a terrible fright about the prospect of war. You know her boy's in Ours. Asks me if I think the regiment will be ordered out. I may show my lady that. (*replaces letter in pocket, then tears another into very small pieces. Sighs deeply*) Heigho ! It's not much use. It is sure to be found out at last.

(CHALCOT sits by stump R., on ground)

Exit SIR ALEXANDER, l. 1 E. ANGUS MACALISTER comes down the avenue, U.E.R. CHALCOT smokes incessantly ; as soon as one cigar or pipe is out, he lights another.

CHAL. Well, Gus. Just got in ?

ANGUS. (R.) Yes. Slept last night in barracks. Got leave again for to-day.

ANGUS is grave and composed in manner : as he speaks, he looks about him, as if his thoughts were away.

CHAL. Bring down a paper with you ?

ANGUS. Yes. (*gives him newspaper, which CHALCOT looks over*) Where are all the people gone ? There's nobody in the Hall.

CHAL. Gone to the Cottage to try on a pair of new twins—born on the estate. My lady, Sir Alick, Miss Netley, the Prince, and Blanche.

ANGUS. Have they been gone long?

(crosses to seat R. and puts R. foot on it)

CHAL. No. I haven't quite made up my mind whether I like that Prince Perovsky or not. Do you like him?

ANGUS. I never think about him.

CHAL. (aside) That's not true, Angus, my man. (aloud) I wonder if we shall have war with Russia?

(eyeing ANGUS)

ANGUS. I don't know—I don't care—I wish we had!

CHAL. Out of sorts?

ANGUS. Yes.

CHAL. Have a weed. (handing cigar-case. ANGUS goes to CHALCOT and takes cigarette) Why want war? For the sake of change?

ANGUS. Yes.

CHAL. Change of scene?

ANGUS. Change of anything—change for anything—silver, copper—anything out of this!

(goes to seat R. and sits)

CHAL. Out of what?

(puffing smoke)

ANGUS. Out at elbows! If there's no war I shall go to India. What use in staying here—without a shilling or a friend? (plucking leaf) What chance is there?

CHAL. What chance! You mean what chances? Plenty. You're young—good family—marry a fortune.

ANGUS. Marry for money! That's not the way with the MacAlisters.

CHAL. Umph! Marriage is a mistake, but ready money's real enjoyment; at least, so people think who haven't got it. I suppose you've made your choice?

ANGUS. I have. Perhaps you're aware of that?

CHAL. Yes.

ANGUS. And who it is?

CHAL. Yes.

ANGUS. I'm a bad hand at concealment. I'm too proud of loving her I love to hide it. That's why I mean to go to India.

(crosses to tree, R.)

CHAL. Better stop here and smoke. I feel in a confidential humour. So you're in love with Blanche?

ANGUS. YES.

CHAL. I saw that long ago. You know that I proposed to her?

ANGUS. Yes.

CHAL. But I'm proud to say she wouldn't have me. Ah! she's a sensible girl; and her spirited conduct in saying "No!" on that occasion laid me under an obligation to her for life.

ANGUS. She declined?

CHAL. She declined very much. I only did it to please Sir Alick, who thought the two properties would go well together—never mind the two humans. Marriage means to sit opposite at table, and be civil to each other before company. Blanche Haye and Hugh Chalcot. Pooh! the service should have run: "I, Brewhouses, Malt-kilns, Public-houses, and Premises, take thee, Landed Property, grass and arable, farm-houses, tenements, and Salmon Fisheries, to my wedded wife, to have and to hold for dinners and evening parties, for carriage and horse-back, for balls and presentations, to bore and to tolerate, till mutual aversion do us part" but Land, grass and arable, farm-houses, tenements, and Salmon Fisheries said "No"; and Brewhouses is free. *(strikes match)*

ANGUS. At all events, you could offer her a fortune.

CHAL. And you're too proud to make her an offer because you're poor! (ANGUS sighs) You're wrong. You're very wrong. I have more cause for complaint than you. I'm a great match. My father was senior partner in the brewery. When he died, he left me heaps. His brother, my uncle, died—left me more. My cousin went mad—bank-notes on the brain. His share fell to me; and, to crown my embarrassments, a grand-aunt, who lived in retirement in Cornwall on four hundred a year, with a faithful poodle and a treacherous companion, died too, leaving me the accumulated metallic refuse of misspent years. Mammas languished at me for their daughters, and daughters languished at me as their mammas told them. At last my time came. I fell in love—down, down, down, into an abyss where there was neither sense nor patience, nor reason—nothing but love and hope. My heart flared with happiness as if it were lighted up with oxygen. She was eighteen—blue eyes—hair the colour of wheat, with a ripple on it like the corn as it bends to the breeze—fair as milk. She looked like china with a soul in it. Pa made much of me—ma made much of me; so did her brothers and sisters, and uncles and aunts, and cousins

and cousinettes, and cousiniculings. How I hated 'em ! One day I heard her speaking of me to a sister ; she said—her voice said—that voice that, as I listened to it, ran up and down my arms, and gave me palpitation—she said, “I don't care much about him ; but then he's so very rich !” (*his face falls*) That cured me of marriage, and mutual affection, and the rest of the poetical lies. (*knocking ashes out of pipe*) You've youth, health, strength, and not a shilling—everything to hope for. Women can love *you* for *yourself* alone. Money doesn't poison your existence. You're not a prize pig, tethered in a golden sty. What is left for me ? Purchasable charms ; every wish gratified ; every aspiration anticipated, and the sight of the drays belonging to the firm rolling about London with my name on them, and a fat and happy drayman sitting on the shafts, whom I envy with all my heart. Pity the poor ! Pity the rich ; for they are bankrupts in friendship, and beggars in love.

ANGUS. (*crosses to CHALCOT and standing over him*) So, because one woman was selfish, you fall in love with poverty, and the humiliations and insults—insults you cannot resent—heaped on you daily by inferiors. Prudent mothers point you out as dangerous, and daughters regard you as an epidemic. You are a waiter upon fortune—a man on the look-out for a wife with money—a creature whose highest aim and noblest ambition is to sell himself and his name for good rations and luxurious quarters—a footman out of livery, known as the husband of Miss So-and-so, the heiress. You talk like a spoiled child ! The rich man is to be envied. He can load her he loves with proofs of his affection—he can face her father and ask him for her hand—he can roll her in his carriage to a palace, and say, This is your home, and I am your servant !

(*back to seat R.*)

CHAL. You talk like a—man in love. Couldn't you face Sir Alick ?

ANGUS. No.

(*sits R.*)

CHAL. His marriage hasn't made him happy. Poo-Sir Alick ! He never could have been happy with his weakness.

ANGUS. You mean Lady Shendry ?

CHAL. No ; she's not a weakness—she's a power. No ; Sir Alick's great regret in life is that he isn't tall. There's a skeleton everywhere ; and his skeleton lacks a foot. He can't reach happiness by ten inches. He's a fine soldier, and an accomplished gentleman ; his misery is that he is

short. An odd sort of unhappiness, isn't it, from the point of view of men of our height?

ANGUS. What's that to do with the subject of money *versus* none?

CHALCOT. Nothing whatever—that's why I mentioned it.

ANGUS. Talking of money—you lent me £50. Here it is. (*giving him note from pocket-book*) I got a note for fifty, because it was portable. (*crosses to CHALCOT*)

CHALCOT. (*taking it reluctantly*) If it shouldn't be quite convenient—

ANGUS. Oh, quite.

(*goes up, R.C., cutting at leaves of tree with cane*)

CHALCOT. (*aside*) Now this would be of use to him; it's of none to me. I know he wants it—I don't; I didn't even remember that I'd lent it him. Confound it. (*putting it in his pocket*) It's enough to make a man hate his kind, and build a hospital.

ANGUS. (*at top of avenue*) Coming in?

CHALCOT. No; I shall stay here. (*turning, and lying on ground*) The great comfort of the country is, one can enjoy peace and quiet. (*turns to L. A large wooden ball is thrown from L. 1 E. It falls near CHALCOT's head. He starts up*) "Eh!" (*four more balls are thrown, each nearly hitting him*) By Jove! (*rises and goes R.*)

ANGUS. Here they are!

Enter PRINCE, BLANCHE, LADY SHENDRYN, MARY, SIR ALEXANDER, and CAPTAIN SAMPREY, L. 1 E.

ANGUS.



CHALCOT.



PRINCE.



BLANCHE.



MARY.



LADY S.



SIR A.



PRINCE. (*looking at bowls. To BLANCHE*) Yours—that's ten. It's your first throw. Permit me.

(*picks up the bowl. ANGUS comes down between them*)

ANGUS. Good morning.

BLANCHE. Oh, Cousin Angus, how you made me start! (*as the PRINCE hands her the ball, she drops it with a start*)

LADY S. My dear child, my nerves!

(*leans against SIR ALEXANDER*)

SIR A. Don't be so affected.

(*aside to her, LADY SHENDRYN sits L.*)

ANGUS. Good morning, Lady Shendry ; good morning, Miss Netley. (*c., and raising hat*) How are you, Samprey ?
 SAMP. How d'ye do, Mac ?

The Prince and Blanche are a little up, R.C. ANGUS joins them.

CHAL. (R.C.) Who threw that ball ?

(pointing to the first one thrown)

MARY. (L.C.) I did.

CHAL. It only just missed falling on my head.

MARY. I'm very sorry.

CHAL. That it missed me ?

MARY. No ; that it fell so far off.

CHAL. My head ?

MARY. No ; that other wooden thing.

(pointing to ball)

Chalcot, very wild, goes up R. MARY, laughing to herself, goes up L.

ANGUS. May I join in the game ?

SAMP. Take my hand, Mac. (giving him bowl)

LADY S. It's going to rain. We'd better get indoors.

BLANCHE. Oh no, it won't. It never rains when I wish it to be fine. Now, where shall I throw it. (going L.)

PRINCE. (R.C.) I would suggest this side of the hillock.

ANGUS. (L.C.) I would advise the other. We couldn't see what became of it then.

BLANCHE. The other side. There !

(throws ball off, R. 1 E.)

ANGUS. (about to throw) Now then !

(PRINCE and ANGUS both go to throw and collide)

LADY S. (interposing) It's for the Prince to throw first.

ANGUS. I beg your pardon.

PRINCE. No ; after you. (ANGUS refuses. PRINCE throws)
 There ! (ANGUS throws)

Prince goes to Blanche and then to Lady Shendryn as soon as Angus has thrown, who immediately returns to Blanche. Chalcot, in looking after the throwing, is in Mary's way when her turn arrives. She coughs and he turns suddenly.

CHAL. (R., to MARY) Are you going to throw now ?

MARY. Yes ; why do you ask ?

CHAL. That I may get out of the way.

(crosses, up R.)

MARY throws, then goes up, and sits on stump, L., looking at paper.

PRINCE. (R.) Now, Lady Shendry.

LADY S. (L.C.) Oh, I am so fatigued ! My dear Prince, pray throw for me.

(PRINCE throws. LADY SHENDRYN goes up)

SAMP. All thrown. Who's won ?

(PRINCE and ANGUS start together, then stop)

ANGUS. I beg your pardon.

PRINCE. After you.

(they hesitate, each unwilling to precede the other)

BLANCHE. (crossing R.) Oh, do go ! You can't stop to behave prettily across country.

BLANCHE exits, R. 1 E., followed by ANGUS and the PRINCE, then SAMPREY.

LADY S. (coming down, L.C., trying to take SIR ALEXANDER'S arm) I'm so tired, Alexander.

SIR A. (avoiding her) Do leave me alone.

(exit, R. 1 E.)

LADY S. Miss Netley, I must trouble you.

MARY is seated on stump, L. 2 E. LADY SHENDRYN takes her arm. LADY SHENDRYN and MARY cross and exeunt, R. 1 E. MARY and CHALCOT exchanging looks.

CHAL (alone) Serves her right. Poor Angus Mac-Moth. He'll flutter round that beautiful flame till he singses his philabeg. (the patter of rain heard upon the leaves) Lady Shendryn was right. It's coming down. That'll break up the skittle party. (the SERGEANT enters, L. 1 E., puts out his hand, feels the rain, and takes shelter under tree, L. 2 E. There's the Sergeant. I must tip him something in consideration of his recent domestic—affliction. (takes out pocket-book) I'll give him a fiver—eh ? Here's Angus's fifty, I'll give him that. (pausing) No ; he'll go mentioning it, and it will get into the papers, and there'll be a paragraph about the singular munificence of Hugh Chalcot, Esq., the eminent brewer !—eminent !—as if a brewer could be eminent ! No ; I daren't give him the fifty. (stands under tree, next to SERGEANT, L. 1 E. SERGEANT touches his cap) Wet day, Sergeant. (turning up coat collar)

SER. Yes, sir.

CHAL. Glad to hear that Mrs. Jones is getting over her little difficulty—I should say difficulties—so well.

SER. Thank you, sir ; she is as a person might say, sir, as well as can be expected. *(with solemnity)*

During this scene the rain comes down more heavily, and the stage darkens.

CHAL. Have a pipe, Sergeant ?

SER. Thank you, sir. (CHALCOT gives him tobacco and fusee. *They fill and light pipes*) Thank you, sir.

CHAL. Sergeant, how many are you in family now ?

SER. Eight, sir. *(lighting pipe)*

CHAL. Eight ! Good gracious ! *(aside, and looking at note)* If I were only sure he wouldn't mention it —

SER. Yes, sir. Six before, and two this morning—six and two are eight.

CHAL. Rather a large family. May I ask what your pay is ?

SER. One-and-tenpence a day, sir.

CHAL. One-and-tenp—*(aside)* P'raps he wouldn't mention it ! *(aloud)* A small income for so large a family !

SER. Yes, sir ; the family is larger than the income ; but then there are other things, and Sir Alick is very kind, and so is my lady, and I hope for promotion—I may be colour-sergeant some day, and my eldest boy will soon be in the band ; and so you see, sir, it's not a bad look-out, take one thing with another.

CHAL. *(astonished. Aside)* Happiness and hope, with a wife and eight children on one-and-tenpence a day ! Oh, Contentment ! in what strange, out-of-the-way holes do you hide yourself ? If he wouldn't mention it ! *(looking at note. Aloud)* Twins !—both of the same sex ?

SER. No, sir—one boy, one girl.

CHAL. Which is the elder ?

SER. Don't know, sir. Don't think Mrs. Jones knows. Don't think they know themselves. We never had a baby-girl before, sir. It's quite a new invention on Mrs. Jones's part. We always have boys, 'cos they make the best soldiers. There's one thing as strikes me with regard to these twins as being odd.

CHAL. Odd !—you mean even. What's odd ?

SER. I'm their father, and so the credit of them must be half mine ; and yet everybody asks after Mrs. Jones, and nobody asks after me.

CHAL. Oh, vanity ! vanity ! poor human vanity ! *(rain hard)* By Jove, it is coming down. The skittle party must be broken up. *(crossing up, c.)* Well, Sergeant, I wish the

twins all sorts of good luck, and their mamma and papa likewise. Please buy 'em something for me. (*giving note*) Good morning. (*hurries up avenue, and goes off, R.U.E.*)

SER. Here's luck! (*looking at note*) Hey! Hullo! Here's some mistake! (*calling after CHALCOT*) Hi! Sir! Sir! (*CHALCOT re-enters, R.U.E.*) I beg your pardon, sir, for calling you back; but you've made a mistake; you meant to give me a five-pun' note—and many thanks, sir; but this here's for fifty.

CHAL. (*after a pause, with suppressed rage*) Thank you, —yes—my mistake.

Takes bank-note, and gives SERGEANT the other, and goes off, R.U.E.. biting his lips with fury.

SER. Five pounds. He's a trump! Who'd a thought it?—and him only a civilian. My twins is as good as promotion. I'll go and show Mrs. Jones.

(*Exit SERGEANT, l. 1 e. Rain and wind*)

Enter BLANCHE and ANGUS, r. 1 e. BLANCHE carries the skirt of her dress over her head.

BLANCHE. How unfortunate, the rain coming on!
(*under tree, r.*)

ANGUS. Very.

BLANCHE. Where are all the other people gone?

ANGUS. I don't know. (*aside*) And I don't care. Your feet will get wet through on the grass. Better stand upon the seat. Allow me. (*helps her to get on seat*)

BLANCHE. You're very careful of me.

ANGUS. As careful of you as if you were old—

BLANCHE. As if I were old?

ANGUS. (r.) Old china. (*gets up on seat, and stands by her side*) This is more comfortable, isn't it?

BLANCHE. (l.) Infinitely.

Enter LADY SHENDRYN and SIR ALEXANDER, at end of avenue, R.U.E.

LADY S. (*her skirt over her head*) I said it would rain.

SIR A. I didn't contradict you.

LADY S. No, but I understood your silence.

(*sitting on stump of tree, l.c.*)

SIR A. Now you're under shelter, I'll leave yon.

LADY S. Leave me by myself in the Park?

SIR A. Do you suppose you'll be attacked by free-booters? What are you afraid of?

LADY S. Of—of the deer!

SIR A. (*sitting down, back to back with LADY SHENDRYN. Aside*) The deer! They're more likely to be afraid of you.

LADY S. (*sentimentally*) Ah! You would have been glad to have sat with me beneath the shelter of this verdant canopy years ago!

SIR A. Years ago, I was a fool! (*rain and wind*)

ANGUS. Quite a storm! You're hair will be wet!

BLANCHE. It is already.

ANGUS. Take my hat.

Takes off BLANCHE's hat and puts his own on her head. Then hangs BLANCHE's hat by ribbon on branch of tree above his head.

BLANCHIE. How do I look in a man's hat?

ANGUS. Beautiful! Take this, too. (*takes off his coat, and wraps it round her shoulders; puts his arm round her waist, and ties coat over her bosom by its sleeve*) That's much better, isn't it?

BLANCHE. But you'll catch cold.

ANGUS. No; we're used to cold in Cantyre; besides, we're trained not to care for it. There's a special sort of drill that makes us almost mackintosh! You've seen troops marching in the wet?

BLANCHE. Often.

ANGUS. That was rain drill!

LADY S. If you walked to the Hall, you could send me an umbrella.

SIR A. I'd rather you got wet. Just now you wished me to stay for fear of highwaymen.

LADY S. I might catch cold.

SIR A. I should be sorry for the cold that caught you.

LADY S. It might be my death.

SIR A. Lady Shendryn, the rain fertilizes the earth, nourishes the crops, and makes the fish lively; but still it does not bring with it every blessing. You have no right to hold out agreeable expectations which you know you do not intend to realize.

These conversations to be taken up as if they were continuous.

ANGUS. What was that song you sang at the Sylvesters'?

BLANCHE. Oh!

ANGUS. I wish you'd hum it to me now.

BLANCHE. Without music ?

ANGUS. It won't be without music.

BLANCHE. You know the story : it is supposed to be sung by a very young man who is in love with a very haughty beauty, but dare not tell her of his love.

ANGUS. Of course he was poor.

BLANCHE. N—o.

ANGUS. What else could keep him silent ?

BLANCHE. Want of—courage.

ANGUS. How does it go ?

BLANCHE. (*sings. Air, "Le Chanson de Fortunio," in Offenbach's "Maître Fortunio"*)

If my glances have betrayed me,

Ask me no more,

For I dare not tell thee, lady,

Whom I adore.

She is young, and tall, and slender.

Eyes of deep blue,

She is sweet, and fair, and tender,

Like unto you.

Unless my lady will me,

I'll not reveal,

Though the treasured secret kill me,

The love I feel.

LADY S. Advertising our poverty to the whole county ; a filthy, old rumbling thing, not fit for a washerwoman to ride in. I won't go out in it again !

SIR A. Then stay at home.

LADY S. Why not order a new carriage ?

SIR A. Can't afford it.

ANGUS. The air has haunted me ever since I heard you sing it. I've written some words to it myself.

BLANCHE. Oh, give them to me, I'll sing them.

ANGUS. Will you ?

Gives her verses, which he takes from pocket-book in coat pocket.

LADY S. Oh ! I feel so faint I think it must be time for lunch.

SIR A. I'm sure it is. (*looking at watch*) And I'm awfully hungry. Confound it !

BLANCHE. (*reading verses which ANGUS has given her*) They're very charming. (*sighs*)

ANGUS. You're faint. They'll lunch without us.

BLANCHE. Never mind.

ANGUS. You're not hungry ?

BLANCHE. No ; are you ?

ANGUS. Not in the least.

BLANCHE. Cousin, do you know I rather like to see you getting wet. May I keep these ?

ANGUS. If you wish it.

LADY S. Where does all your money go to then ? And what is that Mr. Kelsey, the lawyer, always coming down for ?

SIR A. You'd better not ask. You'd better not know.

BLANCHE. But tell me, cousin, have you ever been in love ?

ANGUS. Yes.

BLANCHE. How many times ?

ANGUS. Once.

BLANCHE. Only once ?

ANGUS. Only once.

LADY S. I know where the money goes to.

SIR A. Do you ? I wish I did. Where ?

LADY S. I know.

SIR A. Where ?

LADY S. I know.

BLANCHE. I shouldn't like a husband who was too good, he'd become monotonous.

ANGUS. No husband would be to good for you ; at least, I think not !

LADY S. Isolating me from my family ! Never letting me see my brother !

SIR A. Your brother—

LADY A. Poor Percy ! only twenty-two, and—

SIR A. (*in a fury*) Don't mention his name to me ! I won't hear of him ! Infernal young villain ! always in scrapes himself and dragging others into them ! Don't mention his name !

LADY S. I should not have been so treated if I'd married a man of decent height. What could I expect from a little fellow of five feet two ?

SIR A. Lady Shendry ! (*rising, out of temper*)

LADY S. Such violence ! 'Tis the same as when years ago I discovered your falsehood. I know why we live so near. You have too many establishments to provide for !

SIR A. Madam !

LADY S. I suppose that when that woman—

SIR A. Lady Shendry !

LADY S. That Mrs.—

SIR A. Silence ! (*distant thunder and lightning*)

LADY S. (*rising and clinging to SIR ALEXANDER*) Alexander !

SIR A. Don't touch me !

Exits quickly

ANGUS. (*nearing her*) Blanche !

BLANCHE. Angus !

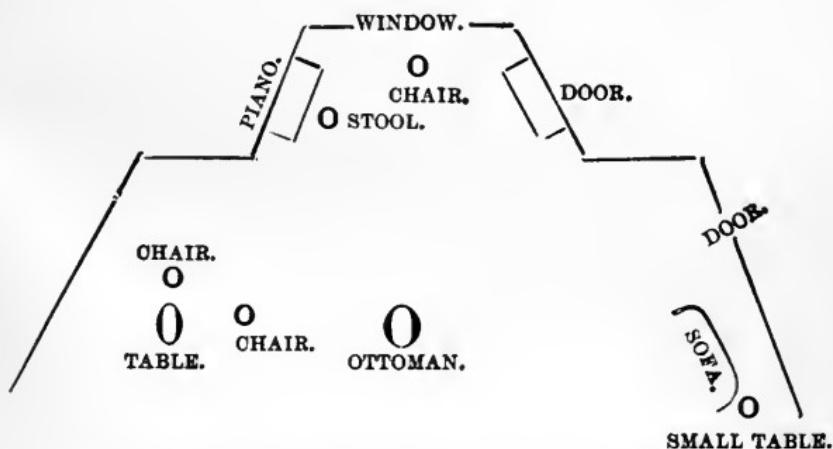
The PRINCE enters, R.U.E., with umbrella up, followed by SERVANT with another, which he takes to LADY SHENDRYN, holding it over her as she exits, R.U.E. (the umbrellas to be wet). The PRINCE goes down to BLANCHE, and takes her off under umbrella, R.U.E, leaving coat in ANGUS's hands; at same time, CHALCOT and MARY enter, R. 1 E., wrangling, she saying, "I never saw such a man! you want all the umbrella," &c., snatches it away from him, and runs off, R.U.E. ANGUS, who is reaching BLANCHE's hat from tree, drops coat over CHALCOT's head, ANGUS puts BLANCHE's hat on his head, CHALCOT pointing to it as drop descends.

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE.—Drawing-room at LADY SHENDRYN'S, in the neighbourhood of Birdcage Walk. Centre opening with folding-doors leading into inner room, with bay window, looking on to balcony. Door L. 2 E. Oval tea-table R., with afternoon tea laid and gong-bell. Ottoman c. down stage. Sofa L., with small round table at side, with cup of tea upon it. Chandelier and lamps lighted. In inner room, door L., piano R., music-stool and chair against window. Folding-doors to be closed at rise of curtain. Small chairs head and L. of table R.

BALCONY.



MARY discovered presiding at tea-table, R. BLANCHE on ottoman, c. LADY SHENDRYN on sofa, reading letter, L.

LADY S. My dear Blanche, I must request your attention to the subject of this letter again.

BLANCHE. I'm listening.

LADY S. Although I am all excitement at Sir Alexander's departure to-night, still, this affair must be settled, and at once; for not only Sir Alexander, but the Prince leaves town to-night. I'll read Lady Maria's letter again. (MARY and BLANCHE exchange looks) The last side is all that I shall trouble you with. (reads) "It could easily be arranged, and though a formal contract could not be entered into, a mutual agreement might be ratified, and

when the war is concluded—and I hear from the very best authority"—"Best" underlined, my dear—"that it cannot last long"—"Cannot" underlined, my dear—"the Prince could return to this country and renew his suit. This is *my* opinion"—"My" underlined, Blanche—"and it is also the opinion of the *Duchess*, with whom I have held counsel"—"Duchess" underlined.—"It is *most desirable*"—"Most desirable" underlined—"that the match should be *made*."—"Made" underlined.—"Ever your own ADELAIDE." There, Blanche! now you know what Lady Maria thinks! and when the Prince comes here to-night to make his adieux, you can act in accordance with the views she has so feelingly, so very feelingly, expressed.

BLANCHE. But why should I be engaged to Prince Perovsky?

LADY S. Because he's a great match.

BLANCHE. But to engage oneself to a Russian at the very time we're going to war with them!

LADY S. But when the fighting is over, you can be married.

MARY. (*aside*) And then the fighting can begin again!

BLANCHE. And Sir Alick going away this very night!

LADY S. (*with suppressed emotion*) It is my husband's duty to go.

MARY. (*aside*) And his pleasure.

LADY S. And go he must.

MARY. (*aside*) And will!

BLANCHE. Poor Sir Alick! I am so sorry.

LADY S. Duty, my child! duty!

BLANCHE. (*to MARY*) But I don't want to get married at all!

MARY. (*to her*) Duty, my pet! duty! And in this case duty ought to be a pleasure.

BLANCHE. Duty! The same as it is Sir Alick's duty to go and fight?

LADY S. Precisely.

BLANCHE. And a girl must put on her wedding-dress for the same reason a soldier puts on his regimentals?

MARY. Just so. And seek the mutual conflict at the altar.

BLANCHE. Oh, Mary—conflict!

MARY. I repeat it—conflict. And may the best man win.

LADY S. Miss Netley, I think you talk too much.

BLANCHE. Why do girls get married?

MARY. (*aside*) That's a poser!

LADY S. O—h. For the sake of society.

BLANCHE. That means for the sake of other people?

LADY S. Naturally. If people didn't marry there would be no—evening parties.

MARY. (*aside*) And what a dreadful thing that would be!

BLANCHE. But I don't want to get married.

LADY S. Then you ought to do.

BLANCHE. Ought I, Mary?

MARY: I don't know—I never was married.

LADY S. (*severely*) And never will be. With your views, Miss Netley, you don't deserve to be. Marriage is one of those—a—dear me—I want a word. Marriage is one of those—

MARY. Evils?

LADY S. No.

BLANCHE. Blessings?

LADY S. Blessings—yes—blessings, which cannot be avoided.

BLANCHE. What do you think, Mary?

MARY. It is woman's mission to marry.

BLANCHE. Why?

MARY. That she may subdue man.

LADY S. Quite so.

MARY. The first step to man's subjugation is courtship. The second matrimony. Any more tea?

(*they signify No*)

BLANCHE. (*rising and going to MARY sitting in chair L. of table R.*) Don't talk about it any more. Think of poor Sir Alick!

MARY. (*to BLANCHE*) And Angus MacAlister.

LADY S. What's that? (*sharply*)

BLANCHE. Nothing! What's what?

(*rising with MARY quickly*)

LADY S. Didn't I hear the name of Angus MacAlister?

BLANCHE. } (*together*) Oh, no.

MARY. }

BLANCHE. She doesn't believe us.

MARY. She knows better.

Enter SIR ALEXANDER, L.D., in regimentals.

BLANCHE and MARY meet him, c., back of ottoman.

MARY.

O

O SIR A.

O

BLANCHE.

SIR A. Well, girls, my time is up, and I've come to bid you good bye.

BLANCHE. }
MARY. } Oh, Sir Alexander !

SIR A. You won't see me again till I come back—if ever I do come back. One word with my lady. (*the GIRLS sit at tea-table as before. SIR ALEXANDER goes down beside LADY SHENDRYN on sofa, l.*) Diana, you know the dispositions I have made, and how I have left you—in case any—in case anything should befall me. For ready money, there is £2,000 at Coutts's in your name.

LADY S. (*dignified*) You are very kind—indeed, you are very liberal.

SIR A. With every possible allowance for your temper, and customary misapprehension of my conduct, I cannot understand why you should meet me in this way.

LADY S. £2,000 ! Where does the rest of the money go ? I know your income. What have you done with it ?

SIR A. Is this the moment—when I am about to leave you—perhaps never to return—to quarrel about money ?

LADY S. Money ! You know that I despise it. I only speak of the disappearance of these large sums as a proof—

SIR A. Proof !—proof of what ?

LADY S. (*with tears*) Of your faithlessness — your infidelity !

SIR A. Consider the girls.

LADY S. They cannot hear me.

(SIR ALEXANDER *back to audience*)

BLANCHE. (*to MARY*) This is all very dreadful. I don't think I'll ever marry.

MARY. Yes, you will.

BLANCHE. To quarrel with my husband ?

MARY. Think how pleasant it is to own a husband to quarrel with !

LADY S. Such large sums unaccounted for !

SIR A. I know it. (*turning*)

LADY S. Where do they go ?

SIR A. I cannot tell you. You are the last person in the world I would have know.

LADY S. Doubtless !

SIR A. Diana, you are wrong—very wrong !

LADY S. Alexander Shendryn, you know how you have treated me. You know—

SIR A. I know that at one time you had just cause of

complaint. I confessed my fault, and entreated your forgiveness. Instead of pardoning, you have never forgotten my indiscretion ; but have dinned—dinned—dinned it into my ears unceasingly.

LADY S. And, pray, sir, what divine creature is a man, that he may be faithless to his wife with impunity ? What are we women, that our lot should be that we must be deceived that we may forgive ; that we may be deceived again that we may forgive again, to be deceived again ? Sir Alexander, these expenses from home demand my scrutiny, and I insist on knowing why they are, and wherefore ? But perhaps I am detaining you, and you have adieu to make elsewhere !

SIR A. Diana, I lose all patience !

(*goes down r. corner*)

Enter a SERVANT, L.D.

SERV. The orderly is below, Sir Alexander, and wishes to speak to you.

SIR A. May he come up here ?

LADY S. If you wish it.

SIR A. (*after motioning to SERVANT, who goes off, L.D., coming to LADY SHENDRYN*) Consider, £2,000 is a large sum—more than enough for your immediate requirements !

LADY S. (*with exultation*) My requirements ! All I ask is a cottage, and a loaf of bread—and all your secrets told to me !

Enter SERGEANT, L.D.

SIR A. Now, Sergeant !

SER. (*saluting*) This letter. Colonel. Mr. Kelsey, the lawyer, brought it himself.

LADY S. Mr. Kelsey ?

SIR A. To the barracks ?

SER. Yes, Colonel ; he said it was of the utmost consequence, and that you was to have it directly, and that he would be back in half an hour at your quarters to receive your instructions.

(SIR ALEXANDER *goes into inner room, and reads*)

SIR A.

O

SERGEANT.

O

MARY.

O

O
BLANCHE.

O LADY S.

LADY S. Mrs. Jones quite well, Sergeant?

SER. Middling, my lady, thank you.

BLANCHE. And the children?

SER. Quite well, thank you, miss; all but the twins.
The twins has got the twinsey!

BLANCHE. } The what?

MARY. }

SER. The twinsey, inside their throats—just here—under the stock.

MARY. You mean quinsey?

SER. Very like, miss. It's a regulation infant complaint!

BLANCHE. And what does Mrs. Jones think of your going away to Varna?

SER. Well, mum, she don't like it much. She is a little cut up about it, and has made me a outfit—six new shirts complete. (*piqued*) The twins don't seem to care much—but children never seem to know when you've done enough for 'em!

MARY. And how do you like it?

SER. Well, miss, I'm sorry to leave the missus and the children—'specially them twins, who wants more looking after than the others, being two; but I shouldn't like to stay behind. I don't think the company could get along without me.

SIR A. (*coming down c., violently agitated*) Good heavens!

LADY S. What's the matter? (all rise)

SIR A. Nothing! (pacing stage)

LADY S. Can I— (offering to take letter)

SIR A. (*crushing letter in his hand. Aside*) What's to be done? What's to be done? What's to be done? (*looks at time-piece*) Sergeant, take a cab, drive to the Garrick—the Garrick Club—as hard as you can go. Ask for Mr. Chalcot; bring him here directly. He's dining there, I know. Lose no time, for I haven't a moment to spare.

(*Exit SERGEANT, L.D., after saluting*)

LADY S. More mystery! (sits on sofa)

BLANCHE. } (together) { You quite frighten me.

MARY. } Can I be of any—

SIR A. No, my dears—no. I must speak to your aunt again, but alone. Step into this room for a few minutes.

Signifies to them to go into inner room. MARY and BLANCHE go in, exchanging glances. SIR ALEX-

ANDER closes door after them.

LADY S. What's coming now ?

SIR A. (*looking at letter, then advancing*) Diana, I grieve to tell you that I cannot leave you the £2,000 I spoke of.

LADY S. What ?

SIR A. (*looking at letter*) I can only leave you £500.

LADY S. This is that letter ?

SIR A. Yes.

LADY S. From Mr. Kelsey ! Whenever that fellow shows his face, there is always trouble.

SIR A. Don't wrong poor Kelsey. He is an excellent man.

LADY S. £2,000 !—£500 ! Why this sudden call for £1,500 ?

SIR A. I dare not tell you.

LADY S. Show me that letter.

SIR A. Impossible !

LADY S. Why not ?

SIR A. I cannot tell you. I must ask you to have confidence.

LADY S. Confidence !—in you ?

SIR A. I have sent for Chalcot to—to——

LADY S. To borrow money of him ?

SIR A. Yes.

LADY S. For me ?

SIR A. No.

LADY S. And I am not to know the reason of this sudden call upon your purse ?

SIR A. You must not.

(*going R.*)

LADY S. (*rising*) I will !

(*advancing*)

SIR A. (*about to tell her*) Diana—no ! no ! You must not know !

LADY S. (*trying to snatch letter*) That letter !

SIR A. (*struggling*) Diana !

LADY S. I am your wife. I will have it. I will know this woman's name.

As she gets hold of the letter, it tears in half. She has the blank side. Enter SERGEANT and HALCOT in evening dress, D.L. BLANCHE and MARY, hearing the noise, enter from inner room, and go down R.

LADY S. (*showing blank*) The blank side !

SIR A. (*showing written side*) Thank heaven !

(*crosses, R.*)

CHAL. (*up stage; aside*) There's been a row.

SER. Colonel, I met Mr. Chalcot as I was going to the cab-rank.

SIR A. (*crossing, l.*) Chalcot, a word ! — Sergeant. (*speaks to SERGEANT, who salutes*) In this room, Chalcot.

CHAL. An awful row !

(*aside*)

SIR ALEXANDER and CHALCOT go off through folding doors.

LADY S. (*after a pause, crossing and sitting, r.*) Sergeant, I shall take care of your wife while you are away.

SER. (l.) Thank you, my lady.

(*dolefully*)

BLANCHE. And the children.

MARY. And the twins.

LADY. S. } BLANCHE. } (*together*) Oh, the twins ! certainly.

SER. (*affected*) Thank you, ladies. It'll make me more comfortable to know that they will be cared for, if anything should—if anything—'cos accidents will happen with—the best regulated enemy. She's waiting below to march with me to parade, so as to see the last of me. (*a pause*) Thank you, ladies. Good evening.

Exit SERGEANT, L.D.L. The WOMEN look sorrowfully and go up, r. Enter SIR ALEXANDER and CHALCOT, c. door.

SIR A. You understand ?

CHAL. Perfectly !

SIR A. And you'll see that it's explained as I——

CHAL. Certainly.

SIR A. Thanks. (*shaking hands*) You are a friend indeed.

Sits on sofa, l., LADY SHENDRYN and BLANCHE sitting at table, MARY r. of ottoman, CHALCOT on ottoman.

LADY S.

O

BLANCHE.

O

MARY.

O

CHALCOT.

O

SIR A.

O

CHAL. (c.) This is a charming wind-up to a jolly evening. Parting with all my pals. I didn't know I cared at all about them ; and now they're going, I find out I like them very much. Saw Sergeant Jones's wife crying in the hall. Why don't she stop at home and cry ? Why does she come and cry where I am ?

MARY. (*half crying, coming down, R.*) What a world this is !

CHAL. Sad hole, I confess.

MARY. And what villains men are !

CHAL. They are !—they are !

MARY. To quarrel and fight, and bring grief upon poor women—and what fools women are——

CHAL. They are !—they are !

MARY. (*impatiently*) I mean, to cry about the men ! How stupid you are !

CHAL. I am !—I am ! You're quite right (*rising*) I agree with you entirely. (*coming down, R.*)

BLANCHE. You two don't often agree.

CHAL. No ; but then we very seldom meet.

MARY. Thank goodness !

CHAL. Thank goodness !

MARY. At all events, Mr. Chalcot does not deny that women are far superior to men.

CHAL. Pardon me. He does deny it—he denies it very much.

BLANCHE. (*R.*) Which, then, are the better ?

CHAL. Neither !—both are worst.

BLANCHE. } Oh !
MARY. }

CHAL. And, as a general axiom, this truth is manifest. Whatever is—is wrong !

Goes up L. BLANCHE and MARY go up R. LADY SHENDRYN comes down a little to C.

SIR A. (*advancing to LADY SHENDRYN*) And now there is no more to say, but good-bye, and God bless you ! (*holds out his hand*. LADY SHENDRYN remains motionless. *A pause*) Won't you bid me good-bye ?

LADY S. (*R.C.*) The letter !

SIR A. (*L.C.*) Impossible ! It would make you more miserable.

LADY S. Doubtless.

SIR A. Diana ! (*holding out his hand*)

LADY S. You are waited for elsewhere. Kiss and bid good-bye to those you love.

SIR A. It may be for the last time.

LADY S. The letter ! (*SIR ALEXANDER dissents, and again holds out his hand*) Your lady-love is waiting. Waste no more time with me.

SIR A. (*aside*) Ah ! I may find peace in the campaign

—I cannot find it here. I can control a regiment, but not a wife. Better battle than a discontented woman. (CHALCOT persuades him to go back. *Aloud*) Good-bye, Chalcot—(shaking hands)—and remember! Good-bye, Blanche—Good-bye, Mary. (kissing them)

BLANCHE. } (hanging about him) Oh, Sir Alick!
MARY.

They look appealingly at him, and then towards LADY SHENDRYN, who remains motionless. SIR ALEXANDER again goes to her, and offers his hand. She takes no notice of him. He bows and goes off hurriedly, L.L.D., followed by BLANCHE, crying. MARY turns at door to look at LADY SHENDRYN, and meeting CHALCOT's eye, stamps at him, saying, "Go away," and slams the door. CHALCOT looks with contempt at LADY SHENDRYN, who sinks on to ottoman.

LADY S. Mr. Chalcot—don't leave me! Ring for Jennings, my maid. Give me some air—the heat overpowers me. Open those doors.

CHALCOT opens folding-doors and rings gong bell on table R. Enter LADY'S-MAID, L.D. LADY SHENDRYN motions her down and takes her arm.

LADY S. Thank you Mr. Chalcot. I'm better now—much better. (is led off by MAID, L.D., nearly fainting)

CHAL. No better than you should be. Oh temper—temper! And that's matrimony! (BLANCHE enters hurriedly through door in inner room, followed by ANGUS in regiments. She sits at piano and begins playing the Chanson of the 1st Act. ANGUS leaning over her at top of piano. Immediately CHALCOT hears the music he gets over to L.D. noiselessly, shaking his head) How people with these before their eyes can fall in love? (Exits on tiptoe)

BLANCHE sings the song of Act I. She breaks down at the last words with a sob, and lets her face and arms fall on piano. Pause.

ANGUS. Won't you sing the words I wrote?

BLANCHE. I can't sing to-night. I can't play.

(rising, and coming forward. Sits on ottoman, c.)

ANGUS. I shall often think of that air, when I am far away. (standing by her side, r.)

This scene to be broken by frequent pauses.

BLANCHE. (L.C.) I—I am very sorry you are going.

ANGUS. (R.C.) I have few reasons for wishing to remain—hardly any—only one.

BLANCHE. And that one is—

ANGUS. (*nearing her*) To be near you !

(*kneeling on ottoman*)

BLANCHE. (*averting her eyes*) Oh, cousin !

ANGUS. In the old days a soldier wore a badge, bestowed on him by the lady he—he vowed was the fairest in the world ! They were his own individual personal colours ! Some say the days of chivalry are over ! Never mind that ! Give me a token, Blanche—Cousin Blanche—a ribbon—anything that you have worn !

BLANCHE. (*trembling*) But, cousin, these exchanges are only made by those who are—engaged !

ANGUS. (*standing*) And if this war had not been declared, should you have been engaged to Prince Perovsky ? Should you have exchanged tokens with him ?

BLANCHE. (*troubled*) Oh ! How can I tell ?

ANGUS. I should like to know before I go.

BLANCHE. And when must that be ? (rises)

ANGUS. (*looking at timepiece*) In five minutes !

BLANCHE. (*approaching him*) So soon ! (pauses)

ANGUS. Have you nothing to say to me ?

BLANCHE. I—I hardly know—what would you have me say ?

ANGUS. Only one word—that you care what becomes of me !

BLANCHE. You know I do.

ANGUS. Care for me ?

(*clasps her in his arms, she recoiling*)

BLANCHE. Yes—no—— Oh, cousin ! you make me say things——

ANGUS. That you don't mean ?

BLANCHE. No—yes ! You confuse me so—I hardly know what I'm doing !

Bugle without, at distance. Roll on side drum, four beats on big drum, then military band play "Annie Laurie"—the whole to be as if in the distance.

ANGUS starts up, and goes to window. BLANCHE springs up, and stands before door, L. ANGUS goes to door, embracing BLANCHE. They form MILLAIS' picture of the "Black Brunswicker."

BLANCHE. Oh, Angus—dear cousin Angus !

ANGUS. (*faltering*) Blanche ! you are rich—an heiress. I am but a poor Scotch cadet ; but Scotch cadets ere now have cut their way to fame and fortune ; and I have my chance. Say, Blanche, do you love me ? Say, if at some future day I prove myself not unworthy of you, will you be mine ?

BLANCHE Oh, Angus !

ANGUS. Answer, love ; for every moment is precious as a look from you. May I hope ?

Handle of the door moves ; they separate, BLANCHE, L., ANGUS, R. of door. Enter SERVANT, L. door.

SERV. Prince Perovsky !

Enter PRINCE, L.D. Exit SERVANT. A pause.

PRINCE. (*crossing, R.C.*) I fear that I arrive inopportunely ?

BLANCHE. (*advancing, L.C.*) No, Prince ; my cousin is just bidding us good-bye. He is about to sail for—he is about to leave England.

(ANGUS comes down, L. to L.L.D.)

PRINCE. (*smiling*) On service ?

ANGUS. Yes, on service. I have the honour, Prince, to take my leave.

They bow—a momentary pause—PRINCE takes in situation and abruptly turns his back to ANGUS and BLANCHE, taking a pinch of snuff as the following business proceeds, viz. :—ANGUS goes to L.D., turns to BLANCHE, calling her by name. She rushes to him, tearing the locket from her neck, and gives it to ANGUS, unperceived by PRINCE. ANGUS holds her in his arms, kisses her, and exits hurriedly. The music of band ceases as BLANCHE sits on ottoman. Pause.

PRINCE. (*turning slowly round*) Miss Haye, I am charmed to find you alone ; for what I have to say could only be said *tête-à-tête*. (BLANCHE rises) Pray don't rise. Both Sir Alexander and Lady Shendry are aware of the object of my visit, and do me the honour of approving it. Have I the happiness of engaging your attention ? (BLANCHE assents. PRINCE sits by her side, taking chair from L. of table, R.) I leave London for Paris to-night *en route* to Vienna. I mention that fact that it may excuse the apparent *brusquerie* of what is to follow. Have I your

permission to go on ? (BLANCHE assents. *He bows*) My mission here was not, as many supposed, diplomatic, but matrimonial. I may say, as the man said when he was asked who he was, "When I am at home, I am somebody." I came to England in search of a wife—one who would be an ornament to her station and mine. I wished to take back with me, to present to my province and to my Imperial master, a princess.

BLANCHE. A princess ?

PRINCE. Unhappily, this Ottoman difficulty has arisen. I thought that diplomacy would have smoothed it away. I was wrong—and so my mission, which was so eminently peaceful, must be postponed until the war is over.

BLANCHE. Until the war is over ?

PRINCE. That will be in very few months.

BLANCHE. (*eagerly*) Why so ?

PRINCE. Wars with Russia never last long.

BLANCHE. Why not ?

PRINCE. Pardon me, if for a moment I am national and patriotic. Against Russian power, prowess and resources are useless. The elements have declared on our side, and in them we have two irresistible allies.

BLANCHE. And they are—

PRINCE. Frost and fire ! If cold fails, we try heat—that is, to warm the snow, we burn our Moscows. (BLANCHE shivers) But, pardon me, you are thinking of those among your relatives who hold rank in the English army ?

(*significantly*)

BLANCHE. (*hesitating*) Yes ; Sir Alexander.

PRINCE. Of course—Sir Alexander. As I alighted, I saw troops mustering outside—a pretty sight. Fine fellows ! fine fellows ! But I fear I am fatiguing you ; for I am—*helas !* too many, many years your senior to hope to interest you personally. (*rising with courtlinesss and dignity*) Miss Haye, with the permission of your guardians, I lay my name and fortune at your feet. Should you deign to accept me, at the end of the war I shall return to England for my bride.

BLANCHE. (*rising, confused*) Prince, I am sensible—

PRINCE. Should you honour me by favourable consideration of my demand, in return for the honour of your hand, I offer you rank and power. On our own lands we hold levées—indeed, you will be queen of the province—of 400,000 serfs—of your devoted slave—my queen !

BLANCHE. (*sits on sofa, L.*) Queen ! If I should prove a tyrant ?

PRINCE. (*standing*) I am a true Russian, and love despotism !

BLANCHE. (*smiling*) And could you submit to slavery ?

PRINCE. At your hands—willingly. (*sits on her R.H.*) I assure you, slavery is not a bad thing !

BLANCHE. But freedom is a better ! And you came to England, Prince, to seek a wife ?

PRINCE. Not only to seek a wife—to find a princess !

BLANCHE. You can make a princess of anybody !

PRINCE. But I cannot make anybody a princess ! Let me hope my offer is not entirely objectionable, despite the disparity of our years.

Music—"British Grenadiers"—drum and fife heard outside.

CHAL. (*without*) I beg your pardon.

MARY. (*without*) Beg my pardon ? Couldn't you see ?

CHAL. (*without*) I didn't.

MARY. (*without*) I was right before your eyes.

(*Enters, L.D.*)

CHAL. (*entering, L.D.*) Perhaps that was the reason.

MARY. Tearing one's dress to pieces !

(*coming down, L.*)

CHAL. Really, what with the troops, and the bands and the bother, I feel I must tear something !

(*down, R.H.*)

MARY. Poor fellows—leaving their wives !

(*going up*)

CHAL. They consider that one of the privileges of the profession.

(*music grows distant*)

MARY. (*up, c. Excitedly*) Oh, when I hear the clatter of their horses' hoofs, and see the gleam of the helmets, I—I wish I were a man !

CHAL. I wish you were !

(*standing, c., his glass in his eye*)

MARY. (*opening window at back*) We can see them from the balcony.

Music ceases. When she opens window, the moonlight, trees, gas, &c., are seen at back. Distant bugle.

MARY. There's Sir Alick on horseback. (*distant cheers. On balcony*) Do you hear the shouts?

CHAL. Yes.

(*up at window*)

MARY. And the bands?

CHAL. (*on balcony*) And the chargers prancing.

MARY. And the bayonets gleaming.

CHAL. And the troops forming.

MARY. And the colours flying. Oh, if I were not a woman, I'd be a soldier! (*going down a little*)

CHAL. So would I.

(*coming down, L.*)

MARY. Why are you not?

CHAL. What!—a woman!

MARY. No—a soldier. Better be anything than nothing. Better be a soldier than anything.

Goes up again. Tramp of troops marching heard in the distance. Cheers.

CHAL. (*catching MARY's enthusiasm, and sitting on ottoman*) She's right! She's right! Why should a great hulking fellow like me skulk behind, lapped in comfort, ungrateful, uncomfortable, and inglorious? Fighting would be something to live for. I've served in the militia—I know my drill—I'll buy a commission—I'll go! (*rises*)

MARY. (*meeting him, as he goes up*) That's right. I like you for that.

Music—“The girl I left behind me.” Cheers and music.

CHAL. Do you? (*distant cheers*) Come and shout. (*to MARY; then to PRINCE, who is seated on sofa, with BLANCHE*) Come and shout. Oh, I beg pardon!

PRINCE. Not at all—not at all! (*rises, and goes up to window, and looks out*) In splendid condition. Fine fellows! Fine fellows! Poor fellows! (*taking snuff, and coming down, L.*) Won't you come and look at them, Miss Haye?

As BLANCHE rises, LADY SHENDRYN enters, L.D. BLANCHE sits again on sofa. CHALCOT and MARY at window.

LADY S. My dear Prince, I did not know you were here!

PRINCE. I profited by your ladyship's absence to urge the suit of which you have been kind enough to approve.

LADY S. And have you received an answer?

PRINCE. Not precisely.

(*music stops*)

CHAL. (*at balcony*) There's Sir Alick ! (*cheers*)

SIR A. (*outside*) Battalion ! Attention ! Form fours, right ! March off by companies in succession from the front ! Number one, by your left, quick march.

Music. Repeat, "The girl I left behind me."—LADY SHENDRYN, c., starts. *Tramp loud.*

CHAL. They're marching right past the window. Come here and see. There's the sergeant. (*command outside*, "Number two, by your left, quick march.")

PRINCE. Miss Haye, may I be permitted to know if I may hope ?

MARY. (*at window*) There's Angus !

(BLANCHE *rushes up*)

ANGUS. (*without*) Number three, by your left ! Quick march !

Music forte. Band plays "God save the Queen."

Cheers. Tramp of soldiers. Excitement. Picture.

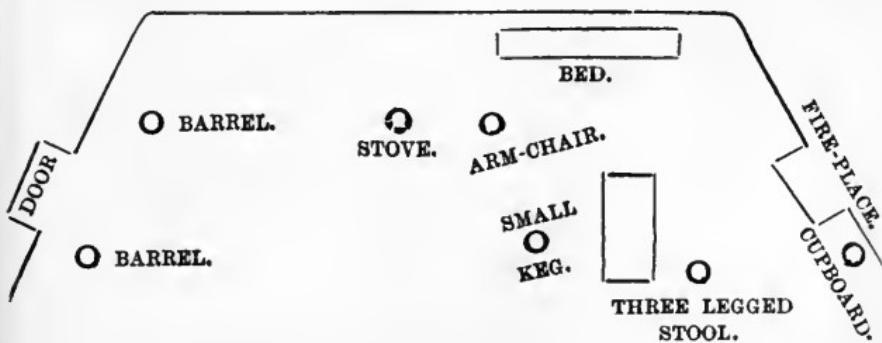
CHALCOT and MARY *waving handkerchiefs, and cheering at window.* PRINCE, l., *taking snuff.*

LADY SHENDRYN, c. BLANCHE *totters down and falls fainting at her feet.*

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE.—Interior of a hut, built of boulders and mud, the roof built out, showing the snow and sky outside. The walls bare and rude, pistols, swords, guns, maps, newspapers, &c., suspended on them. Door, R. 2 E. Window in flat, R.C., showing snow-covered country beyond; rude fireplace, L.; wood fire burning; over-hanging chimney and shelf; small stove, R., very rude, with chimney going through roof, which is covered with snow and icicles; straw and rags stuffed in crevices and littered about floor; a rope stretched across back of hut, with fur rugs and horse-cloths hanging up to divide the beds off; camp and rough make-shift furniture; camp cooking utensils, &c.; arm-chair, made of tub, &c. Cupboards round L., containing properties; hanging lamp, a rude piece of planking before fireplace, stool, tubs, pail, &c. Portmanteau, L. table, L.C., rough chair, broken gun-barrel near fireplace, for poker, and stack of wood. Stage half dark, music, “Chanson,” distant bugle and answer, as curtain rises.



ANGUS discovered, very shabby, high, muddy boots, beard, &c., seated at R. of table, reading by light of candle letters which are lying on an open travelling-desk.

ANGUS. (*reading old note*) “DEAR COUSIN ANGUS,—Lady Shendryns desires me to ask you to come and dine on Thursday. The usual hour. Do come.—Yours, BLANCHE. P.S.—Which my lady does not see. Mary says that men ought not to be believed, for all they say is fable.” (*smooths*

note, and folds it, puts it away, reads another) "DEAR COUSIN ANGUS,—I shall not be at dinner, but I shall be in the drawing-room, for inspection, as you call it. I don't believe a word that you said the night before last. You know.—BLANCHE."—(*folds it, and places it in a large envelope, with other letters, an old glove, a flower, which he kisses, and a ribbon, seals them up, leaving packet on top of desk*) If the attack is ordered for the morning, Hops will find this on the table as I told him. (*taking letter from his pocket*) How much oftener shall I read this? It contains the last news of her. (*reads*) "DEAR MAC,—London is terribly slow, no parties no nothing"—um—um—um—"All the news comes to the Rag; but of course you know that before we do." (*turns over*) Here it is! "I saw the fascinating party, the thought of whom occupies your leisure hours, yesterday; she was in a carriage with Lady Shendry, and Dick Fanshawe sat opposite. Dick has been often seen at Lady Shendry's lately. I keep you posted up on this subject, because you told me to. Dick's uncle, the old mining-man, died two months ago, and left him a pot of money. Such is luck! My uncles never die, and when they do, they leave me dressing-cases! Damn dressing-cases! Dick's name, and that of the divine party, have been coupled, *Apropos d'amour*. I am awfully hard up. Little Lucy has left me. She bolted with a Frenchman in the cigar-trade, taking all she could with her." (*rising*) Um—that's four months ago. What a fool I am! Fanshawe's very rich, and not a bad fellow—as well he as another. (*sighs*) The next six hours may lay me on the snow, as has been the fate of many a better fellow. Oh! when I think of her, I feel that I could charge into a troop of cavalry, sabreproof with love. (*pause*) This won't do!—I'm getting maudlin! (*looks at watch, and takes fur great-coat and cap from arm-chair, buckles on sword, buttons up his coat, &c.*) Mustn't be maudlin here. There's work! (*smiling sadly, and taking up packet*) If I can't live to marry Blanche, and make her Lady MacAlister, wife of General Sir Angus MacAlister, I can, at least, die a decent soldier. So there, Master Hops! (*placing packet on table, and lighting pipe by candle, L.*) *Exit, r. door, singing—*

"Parti-t-en guerre, pour tuer l'ennemi,
 Parti-t-en guerre, pour tuer l'ennemi;
 Revint de guerre, apres six ans et demi,
 Revint de guerre, apres six ans et demi;

Que va-t-il faire? Le Sire de Framboissey—
Que va-t-il faire? Le Sire de Framboissey."

*All exits and entrances are made from door, R. 2 E.
Wind is heard as door opens, and snow is driven
in.*

CHAL. (*sneezes, then sings behind curtain, L.C.*)—

"In Liquorpond Street, London, a merchant did dwell,
Who had one only darter—an uncommon nice young
gal ;

Her name it was Dinah, just sixteen years old,
And she'd a very large fortin' in silvier and gold.
Ri-tiddle-um, &c."

Drawing curtain, is discovered on a rude bed of straw, rough wrapping, &c., his appearance entirely altered, hair rough, long beard, face red and jolly, his whole manner alert and changed. He wears an old uniform coat; one leg is bandaged at the calf, the trouser being cut to the knee, and tied with strings and tape; he sits up in bed and yawns. Rubbing his eyes, and hitting his arms out with enjoyment.

CHAL. What a jolly good sleep I have had, to be sure! (*takes flask from under pillow, and drinks*) Ah! What a comfort it is that in the Crimea you can drink as much as you like without its hurting you! The doctor says it's the rarefaction of the atmosphere. Bravo, the rarefaction of the atmosphere!—whatever it may be. I must turn out. (*takes pillow, and addresses it in song*)

"Kathleen Mavourneen, arouse from thy slumbers."

(*hits pillow, and gets out of bed*) Gardez vous the poor dumb leg. It's jolly cold! (*goes to fireplace and warms his hands, then turns and holds them round the candle, whilst so doing sees letters*) Oh, Gus has left his love-traps to my keeping in case he should be potted. (*puts letters in cupboard L.*) Now for my toilette. Where's the water? (*goes across stage, finds bucket against barrel up stage, R.*) Ice, as usual! Where's the hammer? (*as he comes down he strikes foot against old gun-barrel lying amongst the straw on stage; he winces from pain to leg. Breaks ice in bucket, and taking up tin basin from side of barrel, R. corner, retires behind curtain. Business of pouring out*

water, washing, &c. ; comes out, wiping hands and face with straw) If the water's cold, the straw's warm. What luxuries those fellows in London do enjoy to be sure, soap and towels everywhere, and coffee for ringing for it. The sergeant left the coffee—good (*takes coffee-pot from stove, and pours out coffee*). *Drinking coffee, and shaking his head. Sings*)

"Oh ! father, says Dinah, I am but a child,
And for to get married just yet don't feel not at all inclined ;
If you'll let me live single for a year or two more,
My werry large fortin' I freely will give o'er."

(*getting biscuit from canister, L.*) Oh ! this poor dumb leg of mine ! Just my luck ! I obtain my commission all right—get into the same company as Angus—and wounded in my first engagement. If it hadn't been for the sergeant, I should have been killed. He received cut number three meant by the Russian for me. Down he went and up I got.

(*sits at head of table, on barrel*) And while he was down, the brute ran his bayonet into the calf of my leg. A mean advantage to take—to stick me while he was down. However, I split his skull (*cracks biscuit*), so he didn't get the best of it ; and here I am—lame for another month. The first fortnight's dressing did my leg no good, for that fool of a sergeant, instead of putting on the ointment given him by the doctor, went and spread the bandages all over orange marmalade ; and I should never have found it out if he hadn't served up the salve for breakfast along with the anchovies. (*eating and drinking*) Now, I superintend the cookery department—when there's anything to cook. (*knock at door, R.*) Who's there ? If you're French, *Entrez* ; if you're Sardinian, *Entre* ; if you're Turkish, *Itcherree* ; If you're Russian, *Vnutri* ; and if you're English, Come in !

Enter SERGEANT—ragged great-coat, long beard, his left arm in a sling, bundle slung over his R. shoulder, straw bands on legs, snow on coat, boots, beard, &c. Wind heard as door opens, and snow driven in.

CHAL. Shut the door ; shut the door—it's awfully cold.

SER. (*shutting the door by placing his back against it. Saluting*) Good morning, sir. How's your leg this morning, sir ?

CHAL. It feels the cold, sergeant. How's your arm?

SER. Thank you, sir, it feels frosty too ; but I can move it a little. (*moves arm, and winces*)

CHAL. Gently, sergeant, gently. How about dinner?

SER. Here you are, sir. (*placing bundle on table*)

Mutton, sir—for roasting.

CHAL. And vegetables !

SER. Under the meat, sir.

CHAL. (*lifting up meat*) Capital ! The muddy, but flowery potato ; the dirty milky turnip ; and the humble, blushing, but digestive carrot. Can you cook 'em ?

(*putting them near cupboard*)

SER. Not to-day, sir. I'm on hospital duty.

CHAL. Then I suppose I must.

SER. But I shall be able to look in, sir, now and then.

CHAL. Do ; for your legs are indispensable. Any news outside ?

SER. They say, sir, there's to be an attack shortly.

CHAL. Um !

SER. And the enemy was heard moving in the night.

CHAL. Oh !

SER. And that they're very strong in artillery.

CHAL. Oh ! (*drinking*)

SER. Talking of artillery, sir, Captain Rawbold sent his compliments to you, sir, and would you oblige him with the loan of your frying pan, a pot of anchovies, and a few rashers of bacon.

CHAL. (*annoyed*) Anything else ?

SER. No sir.

CHAL. Confound Captain Rawbold !—he's always borrowing something. Last week I lent him our own private and particular gridiron, and he sent it back with one of the bars broken. (*aside*) Confound those damned gunners !—borrowing one's batterie-de-cuisine.

(*rising. Knock, D.L.*)

SER. I dare say that is Captain Rawbold come himself to—

CHAL. Open the door. I'll just give him a bit of my mind about that gridiron. Well (*taking frying-pan*), you don't deserve it ; but here's your frying-pan, and—
(SERGEANT opens door. SIR ALEXANDER enters. CHALCOT sees him) Eh !—Colonel !

SERGEANT salutes, shutting door with his back. CHALCOT puts frying-pan behind him. Wind heard as door opens. Snow.

SIR A. Good morning, Chalcot. I want to speak to you.
(goes to fire, L.)

CHAL. Sergeant, my compliments—and frying-pan to the captain—and—and—*(aside to SERGEANT)* He mustn't do it again. *(opening door for SERGEANT. SERGEANT, c., salutes with frying-pan, and exits, holding it before his face. Wind heard as door opens)* Did you meet MacAlister?

(crosses L., to fireplace)

SIR A. *(sits on barrel at head of table)* Yes; and that's what I came to speak to you about. He reminded me of the documents that I intended to entrust to your care—should anything befall me.

(gives him packet, which CHALCOT places in portmanteau)

CHAL. Is there any news, then?

SIR A. I think we shall be ordered to the front—and I believe there is to be a combined attack, which is likely to be decisive. Angus told me that he had made his last will and testament, and confided it to you. I have done the same.

CHAL. *(who is arranging a rude spit and string for suspending mutton before fire, L.)* And while you're fighting, I shall have to stop in here, cooking—like a squaw in a wigwam.

SIR A. I'm sorry you can't go with us.

CHAL. Just my luck! Where's the cookery book?

(gets book from mantel-piece, and goes to table)

SIR A. Hugh—you've been a good friend—a real friend! At that time, when Kelsey came with that terrible news just before we sailed—

CHAL. *(at table. Reading, and feigning not to hear)*
 "Roast"—"boil"—"bake"—"fry"—"stew"—

SIR A. *(taking book from him)* Put that down and listen to me. You know the original cause of my quarrel—with my lady.

CHAL. The slightest possible—Oh, yes.

SIR A. You know, too, how she has wronged me since by her suspicions. I wrote a long letter to her last night—here it is. *(showing it)* If this general engagement should give promotion to our senior major, send it home at once. My lady will find—when it is too late—how far she has been mistaken.
(gives him letter)

CHAL. *(endeavouring to hide his feelings, and looking at mutton on table)* You don't know how mutton is usually roasted, do you—I mean, which side up?

(taking it in his hands)

SIR A. I had more to say to you—but I must go.

(rises)

CHAL. I'd hobble with you as far as the hill, if it wasn't for the mutton. (hangs mutton at fire)

SIR A. (crossing, r.) And I could speak to you as we walked.

CHAL. (warming himself at stove) The sergeant will be back directly. I can leave it for a few minutes. I have it! (writes on a piece of paper, folds it, and sticks it on the point of a sword, then fixes sword in drawer of table, so that the point is upwards) He can't help seeing that. (putting on cap and cloak) I believe I've hung it wrong side up. Now, Sir Alick; since my wound, this will be my first walk. (taking stick from R.C.)

SIR A. And perhaps my last.

Wind and snow, as door opens. Exeunt SIR ALEXANDER and CHALCOT. Bugle. A pause. CAPTAIN SAMPREY, LADY SHENDRYN, BLANCHE and MARY, and SOLDIER, pass window, from L. Knocking heard at D.L. Knocking repeated.

SAMP. (without) Chalcot, MacAlister—nobody at home (wind. Looks in, then enters) This way, we have the field to ourselves. (Enter BLANCHE, LADY SHENDRYN and MARY, and SOLDIER, with whip, l.d.) These are their quarters.

LADY S. Oh, thank you, major—so kind of you to have escorted us from Balaklava.

SAMP. (r.) So kind of you to have accepted my escort. They are out, but I should think they're sure to be back directly. In the meantime—

LADY S. We'll stay here. I suppose we need be under no apprehension.

SAMP. My dear Lady Shendryn, let me re-assure you. Sir Alexander is quite well—so is Chalcot—and so is MacAlister. I'll now go and seek Sir Alexander—(all this lively)—and tell him who is here. (crossing, r.)

BLANCHE. (r.c.) Where are they?

SAMP. I don't know. Pray be under no alarm—nobody will come here. There's no fighting going on—nor is there likely to be. We've no employment here but to keep ourselves warm—and to go without our dinners.

Exit SAMPREY. The LADIES, who are shivering with cold, run to fire.

BLANCHE. Mary, your nose is red.

MARY. So's your's.

BLANCHE. So's my lady's.

LADY S. Blanche, how can you take such a liberty?

BLANCHE. It was the frost, not me. Let us warm our noses.

*They go on their knees, and warm their noses at fire,
rub them with handkerchiefs, &c.*

LADY S. I wonder when Mr. Chalcot will come back.

BLANCHE and MARY examine furniture, peep behind curtain, see bed, and drop curtain, exclaiming Oh!

BLANCHE. (at fire) And this is a hut. And this is the Crimea which we have all heard about and read about so much. And neither Sir Alick, nor Mr. Chalcot—

MARY. Nor Captain MacAlister—

BLANCHE. Expect us, and here we are. (*seeing sword*) What's that?

LADY S. (r.c.) Looks like a sword, with a note at the top of it.

MARY. (r. of table) Perhaps that's the Crimean method of delivering letters.

BLANCHE. (l. of table. Taking MARY's hand sentimentally) Perhaps, Mary, Chalcot—

MARY. Or MacAlister—

BLANCHE. Or some comrade, has left that letter containing his last request.

MARY. Or a letter to his wife.

LADY S. More probably to his sweetheart.

BLANCHE. A few lines to his mother.

LADY S. Or his children.

MARY. Or his tailor.

BLANCHE. I wonder what is in it! (*crossing to sword*) I declare I feel like Blue Beard's wife at the door of the blue chamber.

MARY. So do I.

LADY S. What absurdity!

BLANCHE, l., MARY, r., on each side of the table.
LADY SHENDRYN at fire.

MARY. There's no address on it.

BLANCHE. Then it's intended for anybody.

MARY. Or nobody.

LADY S. Do you consider yourself nobody, Miss Netley?

MARY. Almost.

BLANCHE. My fingers tingle to know what's inside it.

LADY S. Blanche I'm surprised at you. Open a letter not addressed to you ! Most un-ladylike.

MARY. (*whispering to BLANCHE*) Tell her you think it's in Sir Alick's handwriting.

BLANCHE. It's open at this end. I can read *T-h-e*, "the." I think it's Sir Alexander's handwriting.

LADY S. (*rising*) Eh ?

BLANCHE. But we mustn't open it, Mary ; so whether it is Sir Alexander's or anybody else's——

LADY S. (*down. R.*) My dear Blanche, if you insist on gratifying this childish whim——

BLANCHE. You'll let me?

LADY S. To please you, my dear.

BLANCHE. You take it off.

MARY. No, you.

BLANCHE. No, you.

Pushing each other forward. MARY snatches letter, the sword falls to the ground. All frightened.

ALL. Oh !

BLANCHE. It's like the taking of Sebastopol.

MARY. Yes ; only that we've got it. (*all come down stage.*

LADY S., R. ; MARY, C. ; BLANCHE, L, MARY opens letter, and reads) "Please to look after the mutton!"

ALL. Oh !

(LADY S. goes to store. MARY, R. ; BLANCHE, L.)

LADY S. Sir Alexander never wrote that ; it's not his style.

MARY. Such a stupid thing to say ! Now put the sword and letter back.

BLANCHE. No ; that would be mean. . We'll look after the mutton ourselves. I feel so excited ; I think it must be the air. (*twirling mutton*) Isn't it fun seeing it go round ? (*standing with her back to fire*) Upon my word, Mary, I think I should make as good an officer as any of the men. I could stand with my back to the fire, as they do. (*imitating*)

MARY. (C.) But you couldn't face the fire, as they do.

BLANCHE. I don't know that. I could talk just as they do. (*imitating slow swell smoking, and taking cigars from case on mantelpiece*) Yaas, it's a very fine cigaw—but I know man—Bedfordshire man—who imports—for his own smoking, very finest cigaws evaw smoked. Now, Mary, you go on.

MARY. (*sitting, l.c., back. Imitating different sort of swell, with eye-glass, and hands in pockets.*) Look here, old fella, if you talk of cigars—I know some cigars that are cigars—and such cigars as no other fella's got the like cigars.

BLANCHE. (*slow*) You don't say so. (*smoking*)

MARY. (*quick*) Assure you—never saw such cigars before in all my life. (*rising*) Oh ! ain't they nasty ?

(*they put them down*)

BLANCHE. Mary, let's play at soldiers.

(*snatching up sword that note was attached to*)

LADY. S. Oh ! you stupid girls.

(*rises, and goes to fire, l.*)

MARY. Oh ! It's such a silly game.

BLANCHE. No, it isn't. To please me ! There, take one of those guns.

(MARY takes gun hesitatingly, from l. of barrel r.)

MARY. D'ye think it'll go off ?

BLANCHE. No ; it is not loaded. Now, you be the soldier, and I'll be the officer.

MARY. No ; I'll be the officer.

BLANCHE. No ; I'll be the officer.

MARY. No ; then I shan't play.

BLANCHE. We can't both be officers.

MARY. Yes we can.

BLANCHE. Then who's to give the word of command ?

MARY. Both.

BLANCHE. And who's to obey it ?

MARY. Neither.

BLANCHE. Nonsense.

MARY. It's going off, Blanche.

BLANCHE. (*in tone of command*) Hi ! Ho ! Ha ! Attention ! Form hollow square ! Prepare to receive (*prancing over to r.*) cavalry !

BLANCHE charges upon MARY. MARY, somewhat frightened, retreats to the corner, r. Door opens ; ANGUS and CHALCOT enter. MARY gets R. corner, BLANCHE L. corner.

CHAL. (c.) Lady Shendry !

ANGUS. (r.) Blanche !

CHAL. Miss Netley !

LADY S. (r.c.) How do you do, Hugh. (*general shaking of hands*) How are you, Angus ?

BLANCHE. (L.C.) We're so glad to see you, Mr. Chalcot. (*embarrassed*) And you too, Captain MacAlister.

MARY. How do you do, Captain? How do you do, Mr. Chalcot?

Places stock of gun in his hand. Goes up and disrobes. BLANCHE, L. CHALCOT and ANGUS *take off overcoats, &c.* ANGUS *helps CHALCOT off with coat. Puts his sword against barrel R.*

CHAL. (R. aside) She's looking very well. But you must have dropped from the clouds.

ANGUS.

O

MARY.

O

Q
CHALCOT.

Q
LADY S.

Q
BLANCHE.

LADY. S. It was all done in a moment. Lady Llandudno felt that she must come over here to see her boy—you know he's her only one. She sent Lord Llandudno to Southampton, where his yacht was lying, to ask the captain if the "Curlew" was big enough to make the voyage to the Crimea. The captain answered that it was, and that it could be ready in two days. During that time, Lady Llandudno called on me to bid me good-bye. I was seized with the desire to come out too. Lady Llandudno acceded to my wish. Blanche asked to accompany me: I acceded to her wish. I brought Miss Netley as a companion for Blanche; and here we are. Major Samprey brought us from Balaklava in a cart.

CHAL. I saw female figures entering our hut from the top of the hill, and hobbled on as fast as I could. I took you for vivandieres.

(ANGUS and BLANCHE never take their eyes off each other)

LADY S. (L.C.) }

BLANCHE. (L.) } Vivandieres!

MARY. (L.C.) }

BLANCHE. Do vivandieres ever come here?

CHAL. (exchanging glances with ANGUS, R.) No; but seeing petticoats—it seems a dream. By Jove! If this were put in a play, people would say it was improbable. (ANGUS and LADY S. go up stage. Knocks his wounded leg against gun, and winces) Oh!

MARY. }

BLANCHE. } What's the matter?

CHAL. I'm wounded.

BLANCHE. }

MARY. } Wounded?

CHAL. (r. corner) Yes.

MARY. But how ?

CHAL. A Russian infantry man ran his bayonet in the calf of my leg.

MARY. Oh ! how horrid ! (hiding her face)

CHAL. I brought it away as a trophy.

BLANCHE. The leg ?

CHAL. No—the bayonet. (pointing to bayonet on wall)
That's the bayonet—this is the leg.

BLANCHE. What's the matter, Mary ?

MARY. Nothing ; but to find oneself close to the realities
—to the horrors of war !

CHAL. Eh ?

BLANCHE. (laughing) She says you're one of the horrors
of war.

MARY. Oh ! Blanche ! How can you !

(BLANCHE and MARY go to ANGUS at table, L.)



LADY S. (coming down, l.c. Aside to CHALCOT) Are Sir Alexander's quarters near here ?

CHAL. No. (aside) If he only knew who was here ?
At some distance.

LADY S. Is he likely to come here ?

CHAL. I think so—shortly—yes. (aside) This is awkward. (LADY S. returns to stove. With fashionable air. Going up) Well, ladies, happy to see you in the heart of luxury and civilisation ; welcome to this baronial hall, which, by the way, we built ourselves. Chalcot fundavit—Chalcot pinxit—Chalcot carpetavit. This is the boudoir. Won't you come upon the Turkey carpet ?

Standing upon a piece of planking, which rocks to and fro.

ANGUS. (bringing down rude arm-chair, r.c.) Allow me to offer your ladyship a chair.

ANGUS goes to arm-chair, and then to r. of table,
facing BLANCHE. MARY sits at head of table, and
BLANCHE at end, L.

CHAL. (r.c.) I made it myself ; it's beautifully stuffed—

put your feet on the hearthrug. Dinner will be ready, when it's done. The *ménü* is substantial, but not various. *A grand gigot de mouton rôti au naturel, pas de sauce.* In the meantime, can we offer you any light refreshment—any lunch? We have an admirable tap of rum, and as for fruit, I can strongly recommend our raw onions. After dinner we can go to the Opera. (cannonade, distant)

LADY S. What's that?

CHAL. (looking at ANGUS) The overture! May I offer you some coffee?

LADY SHENDRYN seated at stove, R., MARY at head of table, and BLANCHE at foot, L. ANGUS, L.C.

LADIES. Oh, yes.

CHALCOT hands coffee to LADY SHENDRYN and MARY; ANGUS to BLANCHE, fetching cups, &c., from cupboard, R., then a cup for himself; crossing to BLANCHE, stirring coffee, with his eyes fixed on her; sees she has no spoon, gives her the fork he is using, squeezing her hand.

ANGUS. (conscious that LADY SHENDRYN'S eyes are upon him. To BLANCHE) I hope I have the pleasure of seeing you quite well!

BLANCHE. Quite well; and you?

ANGUS. Quite well.

MARY. I want a spoon.

(CHALCOT gives her the wooden one)

CHAL. Our family plate. (a pause. They sigh)

ANGUS. Any news in London, when you left it?

BLANCHE. No; none. (pause)

ANGUS. No news?

BLANCHE. None; none whatever.

MARY. It's so hot.

CHAL. Have some ice in?

BLANCHE. (pauses) You remember Miss Featherstonhaugh?

ANGUS. No—yes. Oh—yes.

BLANCHE. The Admiral's second daughter, the one with the nice eyes; used to wear her hair in bands. Her favourite colour was pink?

(ANGUS puts cup to his lips, but does not drink)

ANGUS. Yes.

BLANCHE. She always wears green now.

ANGUS. Good gracious !

CHAL. Can I offer your ladyship the spoon ?

ANGUS. (*not knowing what to say*) I heard that London had been very dull.

BLANCHE. Oh ! very dull.

ANGUS. Seen anything of our friends, the Fanshawes ?

BLANCHE. No.

ANGUS. Not of Mr. Fanshawe ?

BLANCHE. Oh—Dick ! He's married !

ANGUS. Married ?

BLANCHE. Yes ; one of Sir George Trawley's girls.

ANGUS. (*with a sigh of relief*) Poor old Fanshawe ! (*He empties cup at a draught ; sees that LADY SHENDRYN is not looking, opens his coat, and taking out the locket shows it to BLANCHE, and whispers*) Do you remember the night we parted ?

BLANCHE. Yes.

LADY S. (*looking round*) Blanche, dear, are you not cold out there ?

BLANCHE. No ; quite warm, I assure you.

CHAL. Oh, they are quite warm—that's the warmest corner in the hut.

ANGUS. You remember it ?

BLANCHE. Yes.

Enter SERGEANT with order book, which he gives to

ANGUS. *He expresses surprise at seeing LADIES.*

CHALCOT comes L. of ANGUS. ANGUS takes sword and belt from barrel R.

LADY S.

BLANCHE. } Sergeant Jones !

MARY.

ANGUS. (*aside to CHALCOT*) To the front ! (*to BLANCHE, seeing she has observed paper*) So Miss Featherstonhaugh wears green, does she ? (*buckling on sword*) I'm afraid that I must leave you.

BLANCHE. Must you ?

ANGUS. Yes.

BLANCHE. On duty ?

ANGUS. Yes.

BLANCHE. Shall you be back soon ?

ANGUS. I hope so. Good day, Miss Netley. Good day, Lady Shendryn, for the present. (*pause. To BLANCHE, after shaking hands with CHALCOT*) I hope to have the pleasure of seeing you again.

SERGEANT opens door. Exit ANGUS, D.L. The "Chanson" is played as a march by BAND outside; it grows more and more distant. No snow or wind here.

BLANCHE. What band is that playing? (rising)

SER. The band of "Ours."

BLANCHE. I think I've heard that march before.

SER. (r. corner) We call it Captain MacAlister's march. He had it arranged by the bandmaster. They often play it.

(LADY SHENDRYN speaks aside to SERGEANT)

CHAL. (at fire, observing BLANCHE, sings)

"And a cup of cold pisen lay close by her side,

(BLANCHE sits end of table)

"And a billy-dow, which said as how for Villikins she died.'

SERGEANT.	LADY S.	MARY.	CHALCOT.
○	Q	○	○
			BLANCHE.

SER. Thank you, my lady—I'm glad to hear the missus is well, and the children—and the twins—and the new one which I haven't seen.

MARY. There's a letter I promised Mrs. Jones to give you if I met you (giving it) I saw them all the day before we left. The twins have grown wonderfully.

SER. Have they now? Clever little things! Grown! —So like 'em—just the sort of thing they would do!

BLANCHE. (rising, sighing) Has Captain Mac—Has the regiment to go far?

SER. "Ours," mum?

BLANCHE. Yes.

SER. We're going to the front, into—

CHAL. (r.c., coming down, and crossing behind, r. Interrupting quickly) To parade.

SER. (catching his eye) Yes; to parade.

LADY S. (c. advancing, c.) Will Sir Alexander be there?

SER. (r.) Yes, my lady. He wouldn't let the regiment go into—

CHAL. (interrupting) On parade.

SER. On parade—with him.

LADY S. Can we see them? (a pause. CHALCOT and SERGEANT look at each other embarrassed) I mean, can we not see the regiment parading? You can't escort us on account of your wound; but the Sergeant could conduct us to some place where we could see them, could he not?

BLANCHE. Oh!—I should so like that!

CHAL. Well—if you insist—Sergeant, take the three ladies to the—

LADY S. No. Miss Netley can remain here—she is such a bad walker.

MARY. No, I'm not.

(*pouting*)

LADY S. We shall not be gone long.

LADY SHENDRYN and BLANCHE put on wraps;
MARY assisting LADY SHENDRYN.

CHAL. You'll come back to dinner?

LADY S. Yes. Miss Netley will perhaps be kind enough to assist in its preparation. We shall most likely be back before Sir Alexander or the Captain.

CHAL. Most likely. (*opens door*) It's not snowing, but you'd better stay here.

LADY S. No, no.

BLANCHE. We've made up our minds.

CHAL. I understand feminine discipline too well to make another observation. (*Exeunt LADY SHENDRYN and BLANCHE*) Sergeant, take the ladies to Flagstaff Hill. Good-bye, for the present; and (*aside to SERGEANT*), not a word about the action! (*SERGEANT exits*)

CHAL. This is a singular *tête-d-tête*—shut up alone with this girl. I always hated her in England! Now I like her very much! Somehow, the air of the Crimea seems to improve everything. Everything has improved since I've had something to do—and a bayonet in the calf of my leg.

MARY. (*at fire, L.*) Now, Mr. Chalcot, what are we to do for dinner?

CHAL. (*R.*) Dinner?

MARY. (*L. attending to fire, L.*) Yes; of course I must obey Lady Shendryn's orders.

CHAL. Orders! (*aside*) Lady Shendryn behaves like a perfect brute to this girl. Such a charming girl, too—(*aloud*) About dinner—shall we have a set dinner?

MARY. If you like; I'm a capital cook.

CHAL. Are you?

MARY. Yes.

CHAL. What an accomplished creature it is!

MARY. In my poor father's time, I was housekeeper. He wasn't very rich; but he always said his dinners were excellent; and he ought to know, for he was a clergyman.

(*goes up, L.*)

CHAL. (*aside*) A housekeeper, too—ah! (*aloud*) Well, now for this dinner—this grand dinner; to begin at the beginning.

MARY. (*coming down*) Soup?

CHAL. We've got no soup.

MARY. Fish?

CHAL. We're out of fish.

MARY. (*L.*) Entrées?

CHAL. (*R.*) I don't think we'll have any entrées to-day.

MARY. The joint?

CHAL. There we are strong. (*crossing to fire, L., singing Barcarole, "Masaniello"*) See the mutton brightly—brightly burning. (*MARY crosses to R. of table*)

MARY. And the vegetables?

CHAL. *Pommes-de-terre au naturel, dans leur jackets.*

(*pointing to potatoes*)

MARY. Game?

CHAL. No game.

MARY. Sweets—ices?

CHAL. Lots of ice outside.

MARY. Puddings?

CHAL. Unheard-of luxuries

MARY. Have you no flour?

CHAL. A barrelful.

(*pointing, R.*)

MARY. Any preserves?

CHAL. Lots—pots!

MARY. I can make a pudding.

CHAL. (*lost in astonishment*) No!

MARY. I can—a roley-poley.

CHAL. A roley-poley pudding in the Crimea! It's a fairy-tale! (*they clear table*)

MARY. Now get the flour.

Turns up sleeves of her dress. CHALCOT, waiting on her with wonder and admiration, gets flour from barrel, R.

MARY. I declare! here's some paste ready-made; I shall want a paste-board. (*takes up straw from floor and rubs table*) That won't do. What have you there?

CHAL. The lid of the barrel?

MARY. That'll do. Now I shall want an apron.

CHAL. An apron? (*looks round*) I know (*crosses, L.*) I've got an apron. This will do. It belonged to a pioneer of

ours ; he was shot at the Alma. (MARY shrinks) But he didn't wear it that day.

(helps her on with pioneer's apron. She mixes pudding)

MARY. (mixing pudding) Oh ! I forgot.

CHAL. What ?

MARY. I shall want a rolling-pin.

CHAL. Rolling pin ? (looks about—then under table, sees small barrel—takes it up and rolls it up and down table. MARY laughs but rejects it—in putting it down again CHALCOT knocks three-legged stool over—after a little difficulty succeeds in pulling one of the legs out and brings it sharply down on pudding. MARY rolls pudding, &c.) Beauty, accomplishments, amiability, no mother, and roley-poley pudding ! (approaching her)

MARY. My hands are all over flour ! You mustn't talk to the cook. Now, the preserves !

CHAL. (crossing, l.) Here. (CHALCOT gets preserves)

MARY. What's this ?

CHAL. Strawberry.

MARY. Ah ! I like strawberry. That'll do. (smells it) Take it away. Good gracious, what's that ! (both smell it ; knock heads together ; business) Why, that's varnish !

CHAL. It's that damned ointment ! (puts it in cupboard, gets another pot, breaks paper, smells it, tastes it) I think you'll find that right.

MARY. Now the spoon—the wonderful spoon.

CHAL. Our piece of family plate.

Producing spoon from pocket.—MARY puts preserves in pudding.

CHAL. With such a woman as that to sweeten one's path through life—to put—metaphorically speaking—the preserves into one's pudding—that's woman's mission.

MARY. Oh—I forgot !

CHAL. What ?

MARY. A pudding-cloth. What shall we do for a pudding-cloth ?

CHAL. Won't the leather apron do ? (MARY shakes her head) Then I'm afraid our resources have broken down in the moment of victory ! To think that a pudding—and such a pudding—should break down for the sake of a paltry pudding-cloth. (after a pause) I have it !

MARY. What ?

CHAL. I received a packet of linen a month ago from England. I've never opened it. (opens portmanteau, and

takes out towel) Eureka ! I have found it ! A towel !—and here have I been wiping my face with straw for the last three weeks !

MARY. Now I want a bit of string.

CHAL. (*getting string from cupboard*) Here you are.

MARY. Now get me a saucepan.

(*CHALCOT gets saucepan and puts it on table*)

MARY. Does it boil ?

CHAL. (*taking lid off and throwing it on floor*) Yes, I'll take my oath it boils.

MARY. (*ties up the ends of pudding cloth, puts it in saucepan*) Now get the lid.

CHALCOT *gets lid from floor, puts it first on stool, then on table, and then on to saucepan.*

MARY. Now then stand it on the fire, just there in the right hand corner.

Pointing to fire with leg of stool, CHALCOT puts saucepan on fire, offers it to MARY, who puts pudding in it, and places it in saucepan, CHALCOT burning his hands with lid.

MARY. The mutton's getting on beautifully.

Pokes fire with leg of stool, and as she turns, hits CHALCOT's leg. CHALCOT staggers to small barrel, L. of table, down stage.

MARY. I have hurt your wound !—pray, forgive me !

CHAL. It's nothing. Do it again. I like it.

MARY. I'm very, very sorry.

CHAL. Don't mention it—hurt me again ! But speak in that tone—and look in that way again !

MARY. Shall I loosen the bandages ?

(*kneels, L. of CHALCOT*) .

CHAL. If you like ; but you can't fasten them up again.

MARY. I can.

CHAL. With what ?

MARY. A hair-pin.

(*takes one from her hair and fastens bandages*)

CHAL. Miss Netley—Mary— (*taking her hand*)

MARY. My hands are all over flour !

CHAL. Never mind—I like them all the better. You don't dislike me—do you, Mary ?

MARY. Oh, Mr. Chalcot !

CHAL. Not very much, I hope ? I've always loved you — even when we used to quarrel. May I trust that some

day I may not be indifferent to you ; and, if so, that I may make you my own—my wife ! (*she turns away*) Don't let me frighten you. I won't tell the Colonel—I mean Lady Shendry ! I know you can't love me now—but I'll try to deserve your love : and perhaps if I try hard—and I will—I may succeed. Sebastopol isn't taken in a day ; and you'll let me try—won't you, Sebastopol ?—I mean Mary ?

(*with great agitation*)

MARY. Mr. Chalcot, you know I am a poor dependent.

CHAL. That's the very reason ! I couldn't love a girl with money.

MARY. A man of your position—your property—

CHAL. For Heaven's sake don't raise up the dismal spectre of my money ! Don't let cash forbid the banns ! If I am rich, don't reproach me with it. I don't deserve it—it isn't my fault ! I never made a penny in my life—I never had the talent. Only say you will be mine !

(*bugle call without*)

LADY S. Mr. Chalcot !

(*outside*)

Enter LADY SHENDRYN, quickly.

CHAL. (*kissing MARY, who rises quickly, going up, L.* To LADY SHENDRYN) All right. The mutton's doing beautifully.

LADY S. (*crosses, L.*) They're fighting ! — And my husband is in the action ! I—I—I— Oh ! I don't know what I'm doing ! Give me your hand !

(*CHALCOT supports her*)

Enter BLANCHE, hurriedly.

BLANCHE. (*to MARY*) Mary—he's fighting ! He's gone to battle—with two or three thousand others ! I heard the officers who galloped by say there was an engagement ! He's fighting !

(*CHALCOT gathers things on table*)

LADY S. (*L.C.*) Who ?—Sir Alexander ?

BLANCHE. No ; Angus.

LADY S. Angus ! What, then—do you love him ?

BLANCHE. (*crossing, R.C.*) Yes, I do ; and I don't care who knows it.

LADY S. Well, my child, I don't blame you. We can't help these things.

(*kisses her*)

BLANCHE. Perhaps, at this very moment—even now, as I speak—a bullet may have reached his heart.

LADY S. Oh !

Both WOMEN horrified at the picture. LADY SHENDRYN and BLANCHE pull down CHALCOT to c., and hurt his leg. CHALCOT has spoon in his hand. LADY SHENDRYN, r.; BLANCHE, l.c.; CHALCOT, l.; MARY, up stage.

LADY S. Do you think he will come back?

BLANCHE. Will he return?

CHAL. Of course he will! no doubt of it! How the devil should I know?

LADY S. } (together) If he should not!
BLANCHE. }

CHAL. But he will—they will—they never do get killed in “Ours!”

BLANCHE. (l.c.) Oh, Lady Shendryn! I’m so sorry for you.

Crossing to her, and kissing her. MARY has dropped down, to r. corner.

LADY S. (l.) And I for you. (kissing her)

CHALCOT makes an offer to kiss MARY. MARY puts apron over CHALCOT’s head.

MARY. (r., repulsing him) I’m so glad you are not fighting!

CHAL. (r.) Are you! (pointing to LADY SHENDRYN and BLANCHE) It’s wrong of me to be so happy, isn’t it.

(CHALCOT and MARY go up)

LADY S. Think dear; it’s my husband!

BLANCHE. And the man I love!

LADY S. And we parted in anger!

Distant cannon and bugle calls heard throughout following scene.

BLANCHE. And he never knew how much I loved him! Oh! if I could see him again!

(knock heard at d.l. All start)

BLANCHE. } (together) { Perhaps Angus.
LADY S. } { If it is he!

CHALCOT opens door, and is met by PRINCE PEROVSKY, who wears full Russian uniform, orders, followed by SAMPREY.

BLANCHE. } Prince Perovsky?
LADY S. }

PRINCE. (entering) Miss Haye, Lady Shendryn.

LADY S. You here, prince ?

PRINCE. Yes—a prisoner—fortune of war.

SAMPREY enters. CHALCOT assists PRINCE to take off cloak.

SAMP. (r.) Pardon me, Lady Shendry, I have the honour to be the prince's escort. Knowing that you were acquainted, I took the liberty—

LADY S. Sir Alexander—

BLANCHE. Captain MacAlister—

SAMP. (very gravely) Are in the engagement. I did not see their regiment—I could not for the smoke. Excuse me, I must go. Prince, you have given me your parole. (PRINCE bows) I have the honour—(presenting him with his sword. PRINCE bows, takes sword, and sheaths it)

(Exit SAMPREY)

BLANCHE, sits, l., with her face on table. CHALCOT, up l., with LADY SHENDRYN and MARY.

PRINCE. Pray, ladies, don't be alarmed ; it is not a battle—a mere affair of outposts.

LADY S. Oh, Prince, I am beyond comfort !

LADY SHENDRYN goes to fire. MARY sits c., by stove.

CHALCOT talking to her, back to audience. PRINCE goes to BLANCHE, who is sitting r. corner of table.

PRINCE. (l.c. to BLANCHE) These are strange circumstances under which to meet. You see I am always a captive in your presence.

BLANCHE. Oh, Prince, to think that battle is raging so near us !

PRINCE. Be under no alarm ; my presence—

BLANCHE. It is not that, but—

PRINCE. You fear for those dear to you ?

BLANCHE. Yes.

PRINCE. Sir Alexander ?

BLANCHE. Yes.

PRINCE. And perhaps for some other ?

BLANCHE. Yes—my cousin Angus.

PRINCE. The young gentleman I met in London ?

(BLANCHE assents)

BLANCHE. If he should be killed ?

PRINCE. Hélas ! Fortune of war !

BLANCHE. Or taken prisoner ?

PRINCE. As I am. He would be treated with the respect and honour due to the sacred name of enemy.

Reassure yourself, my dear Miss Haye ; your young soldier is sheltered by your love. (*BLANCHE goes up to MARY, LADY SHENDRYN drops down to seat L. of table, CHALCOT goes to fire-place*) Oh, Youth ! Inestimable, priceless treasure ! Lost for ever ! To be a *sous-lieutenant*, and beloved as he is—psha ! Am I a child, to cry for the moon ? *Pat si bête !* (*goes up, r.c., to BLANCHE*)

CHAL. (*coming down to LADY SHENDRYN, L.*) If you see Sir Alexander again, of which I have but little doubt, I think what I am going to tell you will make you happy with him ever after. I am aware that you were jealous of him—

LADY S. Not without cause. Even years ago I had cause.

CHAL. The slightest possible. Since then he has been true and faithful. I know, for I was in his confidence. Sir Alexander's money used to go mysteriously. Do you know where it went ?

LADY S. Yes ; to some woman.

CHAL. No.

BLANCHE seated up stage, r.c.; PRINCE near her; MARY down, R.

LADY S. To whom then ?

CHAL. To your brother Percy.

LADY S. Percy !

CHAL. To save him—to save you and his family from dishonour. Five years ago Sir Alick discovered, by his banking account, that Percy had forged his name !

LADY S. What !

CHAL. You remember the night that Sir Alick left England, when Kelsey, the lawyer, sent him a letter, and he sent for me ?

LADY S. And he withdrew £1,500 from my account.

CHAL. Yes ; for fresh bills forged by Percy.

LADY S. (*rubbing her face*) And he concealed this from me ?

CHAL. Because he preferred to bear the brunt of your suspicions, rather than let you know the extent of your brother's—conduct. There is a letter, which in case of accidents, he gave to me for you ; in it is contained the half of the letter you did not see, that Kelsey sent him. (*MARY goes up to back*) You need not read it now. All that I tell you is true. Sir Alick is a gallant officer, and a noble gentleman (*with emotion, then resuming his ordinary manner*), and come what may, he's sure to bring the regiment out of it creditably. So when you meet, learn to know him better,

LADY S. When we meet—oh ! this suspense is terrible.
Any certainty—even of the worst !

Enter SERGEANT.

SER. (R.) If you please, sir—the Colonel——

(LADY SHENDRYN rises)

MARY. (*running between them*) Hush ! (BLANCHE rises)

LADY S. (L.) You need not speak—I know all !—He is dead !

(*a pause. SERGEANT astonished*)

BLANCHE. (C.) And Captain MacAlister ?

SER. (*confounded*) Captain——

(BLANCHE covers her face with one hand)

BLANCHE. You may tell me—I can bear it.

Enter ANGUS.

ANGUS. Didn't I hear my name ?

(*going to BLANCHE and throwing cap away*)

BLANCHE. (*rushing to him*) Oh ! (*restraining herself*) I'm so glad to see you back !

CHAL. All right ?

ANGUS. Quite.

BLANCHE. Unhurt ?

ANGUS. Yes.

(*a pause. They look sympathetically at LADY SHENDRYN*)

CHAL. And Sir Alexander ?

ANGUS. Came with me. He'll be here directly.

LADY S. (*rising*) Here ! Not killed ?

ANGUS. No.

LADY S. Alive ?

ANGUS. Yes. (*all look at SERGEANT*)

SER. That's just what I was going to say, only this young lady stopped me. (*all go up but LADY SHENDRYN*)

LADY S. Oh—my husband ! (*SIR ALEXANDER appears at door*) If I could only see you, to kneel at your feet, and ask pardon for having so wronged your noble nature ! At the very time I reproached you for ruining your fortune for another, to have borne with me for the sake of the honour of my family !

SIR A. (*advancing*) Diana ! These expressions of affection——

LADY S. (C.) Alexander. (*embracing ; about to kneel, he prevents her*) I know all.

SIR A. (R.) All what ? (*LADY SHENDRYN shows him*

letter) Chalcot gave you this? (LADY SHENDRYN assents)
Hugh? What right had you to—

CHAL. (*coming down, L.*) None, whatever. That is why I did it. (*goes up*)

LADY S. Forgive me!

SIR A. (*R.C.*) Forget it, Diana, and—

(*staggers, and nearly falls*)

LADY S. What's the matter?

SIR A. Nothing. I—

ANGUS. (*L.*) Nothing. Only a slight wound.

All down stage but PRINCE. LADY SHENDRYN attends to SIR ALEXANDER.

MARY. (*R., to SERGEANT*) Why didn't you say that he was wounded?

SER. (*R.*) Just what I was going to do, miss, only you stopped me.

SIR A. It is but a scratch—the affair was but a skirmish. The great event is postponed again. I came here to congratulate Angus.

CHAL. On what?

SIR A. (*whispering, so that PRINCE may not hear*) He has taken a Russian colour.

CHAL. (*L.*) Bravo, Angus! My luck; I am out of all these good things. (*goes up to PRINCE*)

MARY. (*to SERGEANT*) Why didn't he mention his capturing the colours? (*all whispering*)

SER. We never do mention those sort of things in "Ours." (*goes up, and takes off overcoat. MARY goes up, R.*)

PRINCE. (*coming down, R.C.*) Sir Alexander, I trust that your hurt is but slight; wounded yourself, you will have more compassion upon others.

SIR A. (*R., surprised*) Prince!

PRINCE. (*C.*) Permit me, in the hour of my adversity, to point out to you that those two young people love each other. Don't be surprised. Battle elevates as well as brutalises us. I withdraw my pretensions; I am too old.

BLANCHE. (*L.C., overhearing*) Prince!

SIR A. But Angus is so poor!

PRINCE. No man is poor while he is young. Youth is wealth—inestimable and irretrievable.

SIR A. } Well, but—

LADY S. } (*together*) { My dear Blanche—

BLANCHE. It's no use arguing, because I won't have any

body else ; and if you don't consent, I'll wait till I'm twenty-one. You'll wait till I'm twenty-one, won't you, Angus?

SIR A. Well—well—we'll see about it.

BLANCHE. When ?

SIR A. When ? When the war is over.

SIR ALEXANDER and LADY SHENDRYN go up stage.
He sits.

BLANCHE. What a horrid thing is war !

ANGUS. (l.c.) Prince, how can I express my deep sense of obligation ?

PRINCE. By silence.

All go up. SERGEANT at fire, reading his letter.
Tramp of SOLDIERS heard without.

ANGUS. (*turns left about and runs against CHALCOT who has lid of barrel (flour) in his hand. CHALCOT takes him to c., and whispers*) You engaged to Mary ? By what means ?

CHAL. Roley-poley pudding—boiling in the pot.

CHALCOT and ANGUS go to barrel r., CHALCOT puts flour pan and lid down and crosses to MARY, ANGUS to BLANCHE.

BLANCHE. (*aside to MARY*) You engaged to Chalcot ? But he's such a little man.

MARY. You know I've no money—and I couldn't expect so big a husband as you. (*they go up*)

ANGUS. (*crosses from r. to r. of table*) The place is not the same now you are in it, and that you are to be mine. You illuminate it—you're a chandelier !

BLANCHE. Chandelier, indeed ! A pretty compliment—all cut glass and wire !

ANGUS. Lit up by love !

CHAL. (*at fire*) The mutton's done !

General movement. They place seats, &c. All on the alert, as at a picnic. Each person, except LADY SHENDRYN, SIR ALEXANDER, and PRINCE, has hold of either plates, or a chair, or a saucepan, &c. CHALCOT places mutton on table, which has been laid by SERGEANT and MARY and others.

CHAL. *Les reines sont servies.*

(SERGEANT waits at table)

The "Chanson" march played, piano, without. MEN heard marching. Cheers. ANGUS opens door.

LADY S. What's that?

SIR A. The Russian colours. (*whispering, and pointing to* ANGUS) "Ours!"

MARY. What troops are those?

CHAL. (*sitting on floor*) "Ours!"

BLANCHE. And what are we? (to ANGUS)

ANGUS. (*her hands in his, leaning over her*) "Ours!"

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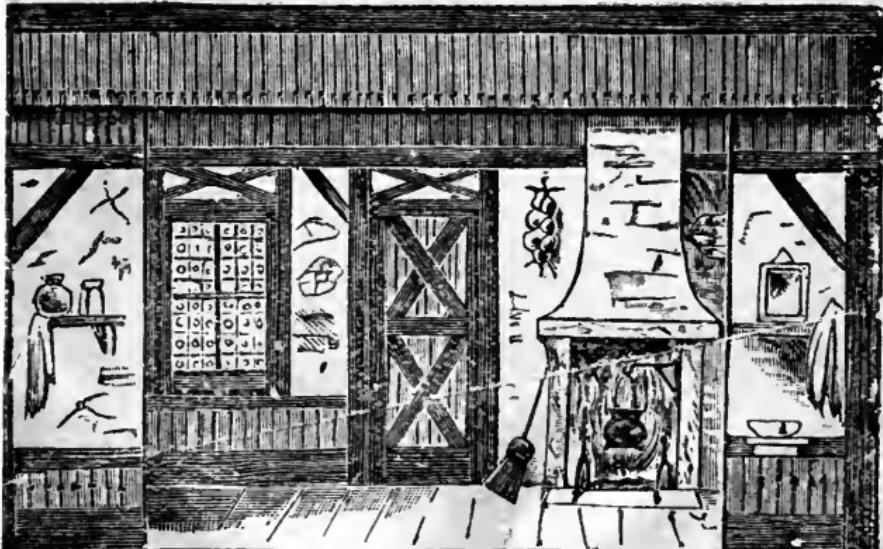
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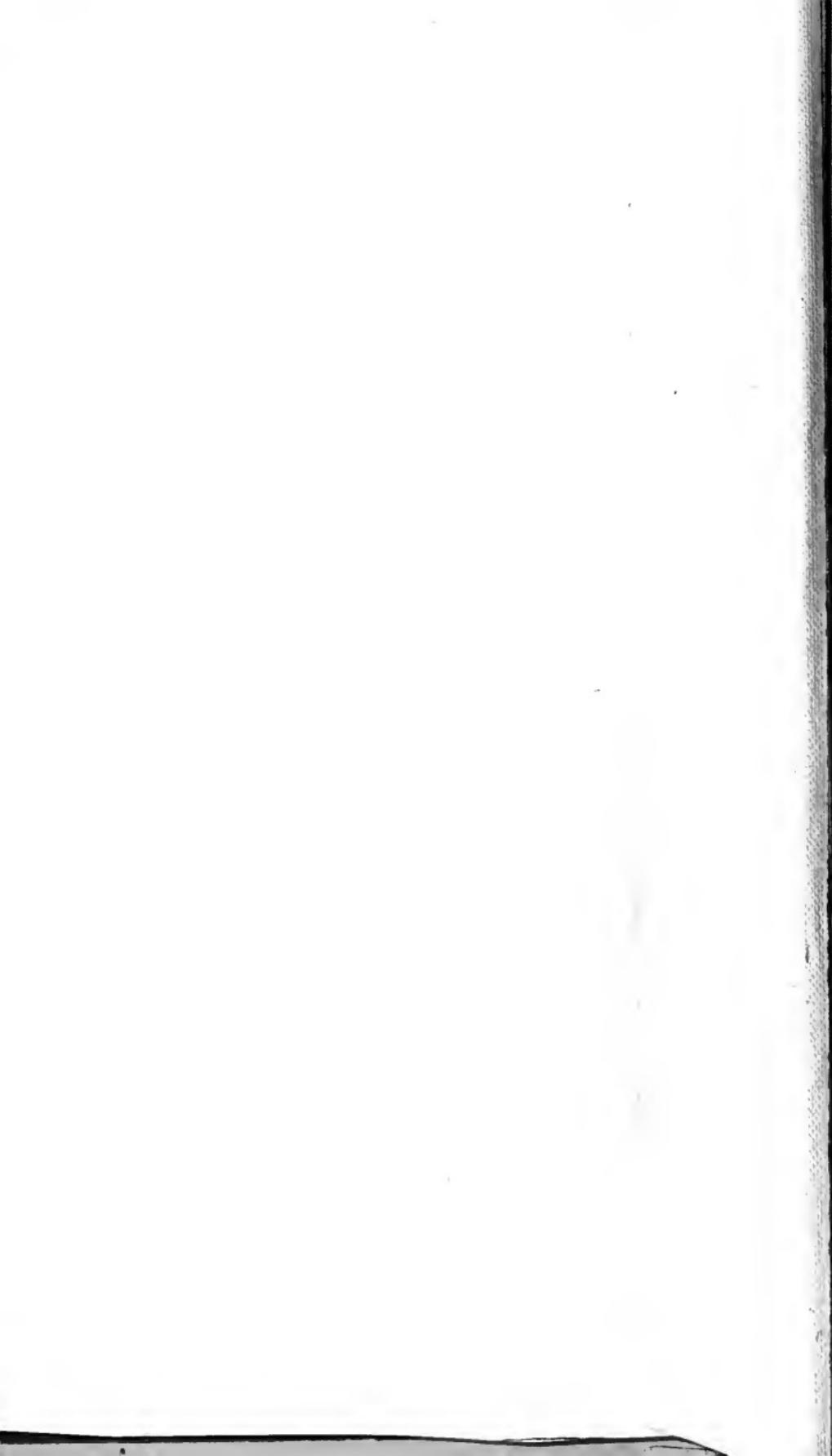
- PASSPORT
 PERFECT LOVER
 PETER'S MOTHER
 PILKERTON'S PEE
 PRIVATE SECRETARY
 RETURN OF THE DIGAL
 ROCKET
 SNUG LITTLE
 SQUIRE
 SUNLIGHT & SHADE
 TWO MR. WETHER
 WALKER, LONDON
 WHEN WE WERE TWENTY-ONE
 WILDERNESS
 WISDOM OF FOLLY
 WOODBARROW FAIR

- MOLLENTRAVE ON WOMEN
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